

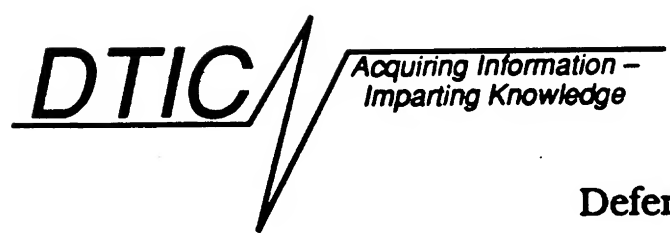
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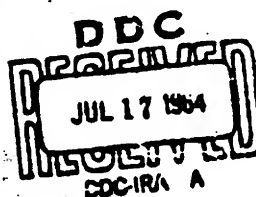
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AN EXAMINATION OF
THE VIET CONG REACTION TO
THE VIETNAMESE STRATEGIC HAMLET
PROGRAM (U)

C. V. Sturdevant, J. M. Carrier and J. I. Edelman

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AN EXAMINATION OF
THE VIET CONG REACTION TO
THE VIETNAMESE STRATEGIC HAMLET
PROGRAM (U)

C. V. Starr

C. V. Starr, J. M. Carrier and J. I. Edelman

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PREFACE

This Memorandum examines Viet Cong reaction to the Vietnamese National Strategic Hamlet Program for the period Dec. 12, 1962, through Oct. 31, 1963. It is based almost entirely on information in the Daily Intelligence Summaries (DISUMs) produced by the U.S. Intelligence Section in Vietnam (MACV-J2). A lack of detailed, as opposed to summary, information precluded preparation of a comprehensive report, but this Memorandum should assist in outlining a meaningful reporting system and a more efficient implementation of the Strategic Hamlet Program.

Made available

This Memorandum consists of a statistical examination of the Viet Cong reaction to the Vietnamese National Strategic Hamlet Program for the period Dec. 12, 1962, through Oct. 31, 1963. It is based almost entirely on information in the Daily Intelligence Summaries (DISUMs) produced by the U.S. Intelligence Section in Vietnam (MACV-J2). A lack of detailed, as opposed to summary, information precluded preparation of a comprehensive report, but this Memorandum should assist in outlining some useful future approaches for both a more meaningful reporting system and a more efficient implementation of the Strategic Hamlet Program.

Made available to RAND field personnel in South Vietnam.

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SUMMARY

The Strategic Hamlet Program (SHP) is intended to be a major step in restoring security to South Vietnam, a predominately rural nation in which about 90 per cent of the people live in approximately 16,000 hamlets or villages of about 800 average population. The rationale in South Vietnam is similar to that used by the British in pre-independent Malaya--separate the insurgents from the populace so that the insurgents cannot have easy access to recruits, intelligence, food, weapons, and other supplies.

The SHP, initiated under the Diem regime, was poorly administered and its accomplishments were grossly overstated. Although it appears that the program slowed down after the Nov. 1, 1963, and Jan. 30, 1964, coups, the SHP still appears to be the Government of Vietnam's (GVN's) primary effort for combating insurgency. Hence there is a need for continuing major analysis of the progress and the effects of this program.

This Memorandum, while handicapped by a lack of detailed information, provides some indication of the pre-coup status of the SHP and of the reaction of the Viet Cong (VC) to the program. It also offers some suggestions for developing indicators for more accurate evaluation of the SHP.

Results of the analysis of this Memorandum include:

A strong correlation exists between VC incidents and natural light conditions. More than 80 per cent of all incidents were initiated at night and 46 per cent in the dark of both sun and moon.

The more serious the incident, the later at night the VC began it. The mean time of initiation for half the propaganda incidents was 2030 hours, for terror incidents 2230 hours, and for attacks on the hamlets, 0100 hours.

Not surprisingly, the size of the VC attack element increased proportionately with the severity of the incident. One-half the propaganda incidents were conducted by one VC squad or less, but for the attacks that penetrated hamlets, the VC used a platoon-size force for a third of the total and a company-size force for another third.

Reinforcement of the hamlet defenders took place in 26 per cent of the VC non-penetrating attacks and in 18 per cent of the penetrating attacks. The reinforcement rate was substantially lower for incidents not involving attacks on hamlets (fewer than 10 per cent overall). When the reinforcement involved aircraft, the frequency with which an attack penetrated the hamlet was reduced to roughly 45 per cent of the value for the non-reinforced cases, and the reinforced cases not involving aircraft. Artillery and mortar reinforcement were equally as effective as air reinforcement in reducing attack penetrations.

The rising rate of attacks against Strategic Hamlets is of concern to both the GVN and the United States. While the hamlet program implementation could be maintained at a slow rate over the countryside in general, this implies that the attacks will continue for a long time--until rather large areas become secure. Virtue of a relatively high density of viable, self-protected Strategic Hamlets and the resultant releasing of conventional forces for the aggressive pursuit of the Viet Cong. However, this slow method of implementation means a heavy burden on the inhabitants. On the other hand, Operation Sunrise showed that a leapfrog implementation is subject to heavy risks and can involve large losses and enforced withdrawals. A study that provided reliable indicators for the SHP implementation and for the VC reaction would improve substantially the means for determining a more nearly optimum rate of implementation.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARVN	Army, Republic of Vietnam
CG	Civil Guard
Q-9	Capital Military District (Area surrounding and including Saigon)
CY	Combat Youth
DISUM	Daily Intelligence Summary
GVN	Government of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
ICSM	Interministerial Committee for Strategic Hamlets
ISUM	Intelligence Summary
MA-V	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAGAR-SH	Military Advisory Group Army Section, Strategic Hamlets Division
OPSUM	Operations Summary
PROVHAS	Province Rehabilitation
SBC	Self Defense Corps
SH	Strategic Hamlet
SNP	Strategic Hamlet Program
SVN	South Vietnam
VC	Viet Cong

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I. INTRODUCTION

Strategic Hamlet Program

When faced with insurgency, a government must re-establish its authority and provide security for its populace. In South Vietnam government policies must be tailored to a predominantly rural, agrarian society--roughly 90 per cent of the population live in approximately 16,000 hamlets* of roughly 800 average population.

The approach being tried in South Vietnam now to provide rural security and to gain popular support for retaining this security, is the Strategic Hamlet Program (SHP).^{**} This concept is quite similar to the pre-independence Malayan program. Elements of the Vietnamese program include:

Population and Resources Control. This may involve relocation, hamlet census, identification cards, curfews, house checks, control of the movement of people and goods, etc. This is based on the belief that if the people can be kept separate from the insurgents, the latter will not have easy access to recruits, intelligence, food, weapons, and other supplies. In the hamlet, the inhabitants are generally known and strangers or unusual activities should be readily noticeable.

Organization of Hamlet Residents. Objectives of this move are to stimulate unity and to create (or strengthen) viable bonds with the central government. The political, economic, and social organizations established in this process are intended to help transmit government services and information to the residents, to function as control machinery. Chiefs and councils, farmers' cooperatives, children's and women's groups, and hamlet committees exemplify organizational techniques that can be used to mobilize and control hamlet residents.

In this Memorandum, the terms "hamlet," "village," and "strategic hamlet" replace a wide variety of terms used by the Vietnamese--Agro-hamlet, Self-defense village, Combat Hamlet, Agro-villes, etc.

^{**} Strategic Hamlets were renamed "Hamlets of New Rural Life" after the January 30, 1964, coup by General Khanh.

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Physical Defense. The concept of defending the village from insurgent attack involves fortifications, a militia, and a hamlet defense plan, the latter often including an agreement with a neighboring hamlet for mutual assistance in defense.

An effectively functioning hamlet system, supported by aggressive para-military force action, could release regular forces from static defense duty and make them available for more aggressive action against the insurgents. In this fashion successful hamlet (or point) defense would contribute to the achievement of overall (or area) defense. By the same token, establishing viable Strategic Hamlets in areas newly cleared of insurgents by regular military forces could help to consolidate government gains toward an overall secure South Vietnam.

Study Background. Conceived in late 1961, the SHP was begun on a modest scale in early 1962. As of mid-October, 1963, 78 per cent of the rural populace was reported to be in Strategic Hamlets.⁽¹⁾ However, a reasonable definition of a truly viable Strategic Hamlet includes a requirement that the hamlet have a trained and armed militia. With this definition, the 78 per cent figure is a gross overestimate. More representative figures are the percentage of planned hamlet militia to be armed that have been armed and the percentage of planned Strategic Hamlets that have an armed militia; as of Oct. 31, 1963, these figures were 49 and 41 per cent respectively.⁽¹⁾ It should be noted also that the hamlets vary widely; some are very much like medieval fortifications, with moats, blockhouses, trenches, etc., while for others the only semblance of defense is a simple peripheral brush fence.

As first proposed, this study would have consisted of a detailed analysis of the Viet Cong (VC) threat against the hamlets, including the Strategic Hamlets, of South Vietnam. To obtain the data, a joint U.S.-Vietnam team was to inspect the hamlets shortly after major VC-initiated incidents. This proposal did not survive the endorsement process all the way up the chain of command.

Nevertheless, analysis of even the limited information of the Daily Intelligence Summaries (DISUMs)^{*} of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) appeared to be useful. These were made

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available to RAND personnel in the field for use in an attempt both to ascertain the reactions of the VC to the Strategic Hamlet Program (SHP) and to identify indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the SHP.

The time period to be covered (Dec. 12, 1962, to Sept. 2, 1963) was later extended to include the two months just prior to the November coup, but the later data are not as detailed because of a change in the DISUM procedure on Sept. 17. Starting on that date, the incidents were categorized as "Specific Incidents of Enemy Activity" and "Other Enemy Activity." Incident reports in the latter category were unusable for detailed analyses since they lacked calendar dates, province names, hours of the day, etc., and often the casualties reported would not be associated specifically with either a hamlet or a target located elsewhere.*

Basic Data Sources

The basic working data for this analysis comes from the DISUMs, issued daily in Saigon by the U.S. Intelligence Section of the Military Assistance Command (MACV-J2).** Each DISUM was a summary compiled from the daily ISUMs*** issued by each of the four U.S. G-2 Intelligence Advisory Sections at the Vietnamese Corps level. However, the DISUMs report only about 30 per cent of the incidents.****

A typical pre-September 17 DISUM incident report consists of only a few lines of text:

DELAIED RPT. 200000 JUL. VINH BINH. VC ATKD GIONG DAU
STRATEGIC HAMLET VIC XR 170 946. LOSSES FTD: 8 COMBAT
YOUTH KIA, 5 SHOTGUNS, 2 RIFLES MISSING. EN: NONE REPTD.

* However, a greater fraction of the total VC-initiated incidents is reported in the DISUMs, including essentially all hamlet incidents (Ref. 2).

** The DISUM format was terminated in March, 1964. Daily Intelligence information is now included in the MACV Daily Situation Report (SitRep).

*** Monthly ISUMs have been issued by the II and III Corps U.S. Advisory Groups, but the categorization is different from that used by MACV-J2, precluding direct comparison.

**** The criteria used in the field to filter incidents is in need of further study. There were 1070 DISUM reported incidents between April 15 and July 15, 1963; the MACV-J2 weekly incident summary work sheets listed 3691 incidents for the same period.

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A typical post-September 17 incident report item under "Other Enemy Activity" follows:

5TH DIV: 4 INCIDENTS OF HARASSING FIRE (1 AGAINST ARVN,
3 AGAINST STRATEGIC HAMLETS) WITH 1 WIA, 1 VC KIA.
2 INCIDENTS OF STRATEGIC HAMLET HARASSMENT AND FENCE
DESTRUCTION. 1 ASSASSINATION. 1 ROAD SABOTAGE.

However, important actions receive half-page reports, often with follow-up reports in the later issues of the DISUM.

Some limited comparisons were possible with the Province Rehabilitation (PROVHAB) Status Reports and the MACV-J2 work sheets.

The PROVHAB Status Reports are issued monthly by the Strategic Hamlets Division, a staff division of MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group). These reports, concerned with the planning and status of the National Strategic Hamlet Program, list Strategic Hamlets planned, under construction, and completed, percentage of population in Strategic Hamlets, etc., by province. Beginning in January 1963, all hamlet incidents were to be included in the PROVHAB reports and the MACV Headway Addenda,* but compliance was not effective until April. These hamlet incident figures (given by Corps areas only) are listed by time period of reporting, while in the DISUMs the incidents are listed by date of occurrence, so that no direct comparison can be made. However, the DISUM reported hamlet incidents are roughly 43 per cent** of the total PROVHAB reported hamlet incidents.

The MACV-J2 work sheets carry weekly totals of incidents, as of date reported, differentiated by division area (9 divisions plus the Capital Military District) and by major incident categories (Attacks, Terrorism, Sabotage, and Propaganda).

Data Deficiencies

Obviously, with roughly forty VC-initiated incidents per day, an accurate and detailed reporting of each incident--even if it could be

*The Headway Addenda is a weekly summary of all types of actions and events. It is published jointly by the Operations (J-3) and Intelligence (J-2) Sections of MACV in Vietnam.

**However, there are very large variations with both lunar cycle and Corps area (Table 2, p. 21).

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accomplished--probably would not be warranted for daily intelligence and staff purposes at command levels. However, to obtain a significantly better understanding of the insurgency, data quality should be improved, additional items recorded, and an improved data-processing system instituted. Deficiencies that have significantly limited the scope, accuracy, and potential utility of this study are listed under three general headings:

1. Recording, Storage, and Retrieval System. The lack of a comprehensive, detailed routine recording, storage, and rapid retrieval system seriously limits study of the insurrectionist movement. Trial use (at CINCPAC Hawaii) of IBM-704 data-processing equipment with DISUM and OPGLM report inputs has begun. However, a manual system such as the Univert punched card system, used in this study, can also be used in many of the analysis areas. (Figure 1 shows a Univert card prepared in this study.) In the present system, many existing data items that would be of significant value for analysis can be obtained only by unaided or prohibitive effort. The storage system should routinely enter items of this nature.

2. Glossary. A detailed, expanded glossary rigidly adhered to is sorely needed. For example, in the reporting system used for data for this study, hamlets were often listed as Strategic Hamlets when, by the nature of the incident (no casualties, no friendly weapons lost, but food taken by VC), they evidently did not have an armed and trained militia, a reasonable requirement for a viable Strategic Hamlet. The term "VC attacked" is often used when, by nature of the results (no casualties, nothing taken), "terrorism" or "harassment" would have been a more descriptive term. Further, for any useful recording, storage, and retrieval system, a detailed and precise glossary is essential.

3. Descriptive Data. The duration of the incident, often available, is rarely recorded. Particulars regarding the friendly forces are also sparser than necessary. For example, one routine item that would be useful in any analysis is the security zone,* in which an

* Both the GVN and the MACV designate and maintain security zone categories to represent the degree of local control by SVN forces.

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CONFIDENTIAL		BAMLET INCIDENT CARD		PGRD MILITARY ATT. NO. 10 ATT. VETERAN	
Case No.	50-2	Corps	2	Name	Nice Natio
Date	23 Jan	DTL	12	Coord.	25 160 233
Letter	28-12-54	Prov	12th	Type	UNK -UC- (SH)?
Ref.	2150	MR	C	Pop.	
Dist.	1000	Sec.		Reinf.	Yes
		MAP		Ass.	Yes
				CAPT.	ASSAN
				Force	KIA (2), MIA (2), KILL (2)
				House	Fence (2), Food (2), Radio (2), Weapon Loss (2)
				ENEMY	Force 4th, KIA (1), MIA (1), Prisoner (2), Weapon Loss (2)
				OTHER	978 CG Co. en route to reinforce
					Ambushed 25 130 870
					Acft Flare drop at 2245
					Acft losses Fd 2 w/1, E 1 KIA
					CONFIDENTIAL

Fig. 1 -- Typical completed incident card

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incident takes place. Particularly for hamlet incidents, data on the defensive fortifications and the numerical strength, training, and armament of the defenders are almost essential for an assessment of the incident. Many of these data are available,* so the only change required is that of recording them.

*The GVN Central Pacification Committee, formerly the Inter-ministerial Committee for Strategic Hamlets, receives quarterly reports that include friendly force particulars for each hamlet. The MACAR-SM section also gets some of this information (Ref. 3).

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II. SIGNIFICANT PARAMETERS

CLASSIFICATION OF INCIDENTS

A major difficulty encountered was that of incident categorization or classification. For example, summaries of the total VC-initiated incidents reported during each week* (differentiated by division area only) are sent to MACV-J2 by the U.S. Corps intelligence advisers (G-2) in a format that in some cases does not even indicate the type of target.

Because no detailed hamlet incident categorization existed when the study was begun, the following classifications were set up specifically for the study and the data assigned as accurately as the available information would permit:

Propaganda. Propaganda lecture, leaflet distribution, demonstration, other.

Minor Terror. Threats, kidnaping or assassination of 1 or 2 persons, burning of a few houses or fences, a food levy, or harassing fire with 1 or 2 KIA or WIA.

Major Terror. Kidnaping or assassination of more than 2 persons, major burning and food levies, harassing fire with more than 2 KIA or WIA.

Attack--No penetration.

Attack--With penetration.

Because the DISUMs do not report all incidents and because our categories and dating methods differ from those of the MACV, correlation with the MACV summaries is not possible.

LUNAR CYCLE D DARKNESS

The incident data of this report are presented in lunar cycles (defined as the time period from full moon to full moon, roughly the 16th day of one lunar month to the 15th day of the subsequent lunar

* Individual minor incidents often are not reported even to the Corps level until after a week or more.

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month) rather than for a calendar month or a lunar month. The lunar cycle was adopted because it helped to display the VC preference for operating in darkness. For attacks against fixed defenses, by VC forces of company size or greater, "the VC conducted 94 per cent of the attacks between sunset and sunrise and 87 per cent of these attacks between moonset and moonrise (or 82 per cent under darkness, both sun and moon set)."⁽⁴⁾ The full moon to full moon lunar cycle thus appeared to be a more appropriate measure than either the calendar month or the lunar month (for which the hours of total darkness are the greatest at the beginning and the end of the month). The lunar cycles are:

<u>Cycle</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	December 12, 1962 - January 10, 1963
2	January 11 - February 8
3	February 9 - March 10
4	March 11 - April 8
5	April 9 - May 8
6	May 9 - June 6
7	June 7 - July 5
8	July 6 - August 4
9	August 5 - September 2
10	September 3 - October 2
11	October 3 - October 31

The following approximations are applicable to any calendar date, latitude, or longitude in South Vietnam with a maximum error of about one hour, half of it attributable to calendar date and one-quarter each to latitude and longitude variations:^(5,6)

Sunrise + 0650
 Sunset + 1850
 Full moon rise } + 1915
 New moon set }
 New moon rise } + 0645
 Full moon set }

Figure 2 is a typical plot of the type made for the various incident categories and lunar cycles.

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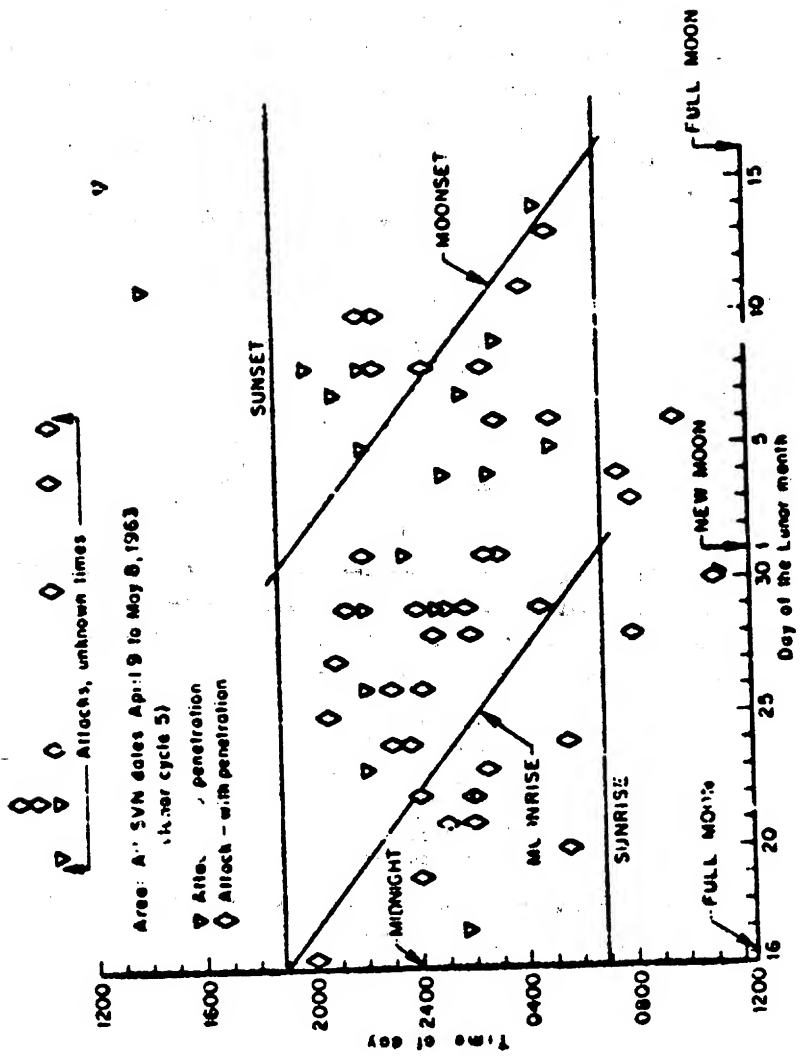


Fig 2---Distribution of hamlet attacks with darkness

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ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Environmental factors obviously play a very important role in regard to the SHP and to the VC reaction. Differing terrains markedly affect VC mobility and supply; differing climates influence the choices of locally available construction materials for hamlet defence, the most suitable periods for implementation of the SHP and the relative ease of food supply. Other geographical considerations could affect priorities for implementation of the SHP, the intensity as well as the types of VC incidents, the CVN capability for reinforcing the hamlets, etc. Even differing ethnic and religious groups can affect the degree of CVN control required to establish loyalty to the government, etc.

The only environmental factors that have been incorporated in this study are those associated with boundaries of provinces, Division Tactical Zones (DTZs), Corps areas, and VC Military Regions (MRs).^{**} Further work to seek correlation with other environmental factors is felt to be warranted.

Figures 3 and 4 show the geographical regions considered in this Memorandum. A few very recent changes, not reflected in the numerical data, are excluded from the maps as well.

References 7, 8, and 9 discuss these influences. It should be noted also that the Cao-Dai and Hoa-Hao defected from the VC within a few weeks after the coup of November 1, 1963.

^{**} MR-5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 plus the Capital Military District (CMD) denote organizational regions of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) or North Vietnam located in South Vietnam (SVN). MRs 1 through 4 are in the DRV. The MRs are the DRV equivalents to the SVN Corps organization.

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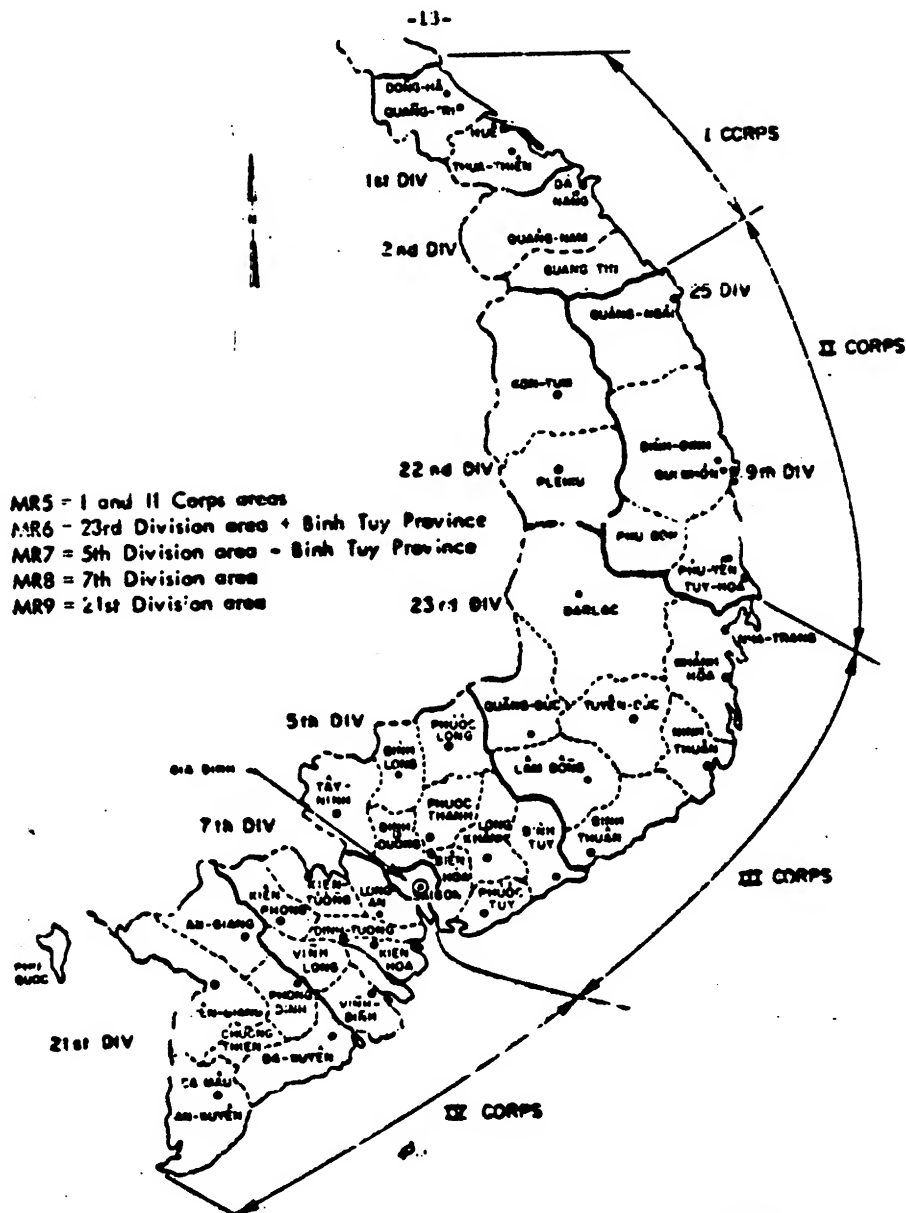


Fig. 4—GVN and VC military regions in SVN
(January-October, 1963)

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III. THE VIET CONG THREAT

One cannot analyze hamlet incidents solely in terms of changes with time. For example, even for a limited geographical area, the types and numbers of hamlet incidents can be expected to vary with the degree of rural (GVN) security of the area, this in turn being a function of the numbers, tactics, strategy, and aggressiveness of the VC and GVN forces, the progress of the SH program, and other factors. The limited data available for this analysis precluded consideration of many such relevant factors.

The VC capability in a given area can be measured roughly by the total number of all types of incidents that the VC initiate. One can then get an indication of the VC strategy by the distribution over time of the various incident types. Hence we first look at the variation with time of the total number of VC-initiated incidents and then compare this total with the hamlet incidents. In this comparison the hamlet incidents (unless specifically noted to the contrary) are those reported in the DISUMs.

Figures 5-3 indicate the changing intensity of the total VC threat with time. The VC declared, and in general observed, a 3-1/2 day "grace period" in observance of Tet, the Vietnamese New Year (1200 on Jan. 24 to 1400 on Jan. 27). This reduced the number of 2nd lunar cycle incidents. Figure 5a and 5b shows the breakdown, by Corps Area and VC Military Region respectively, of all VC-initiated incidents.

Figure 6, for all of South Vietnam, illustrates the general upward trend in both total attacks and the total of all incidents and compares 1967 data with 1968 data. (10) The DISUM hamlet total incidents appear to have been increasing much more rapidly (percentage-wise) than total incidents. However, one should note that since mid-September virtually all VC-initiated incidents are included in the

*MACV summary data have been adjusted to a lunar cycle period by assuming that for any given week the daily incident rate was a constant. Because for certain of the 9th Division incidents there was no way of differentiating between MR-8 and MR-9 for cycle 11, it was assumed that these incidents were divided equally between MR-8 and 9.

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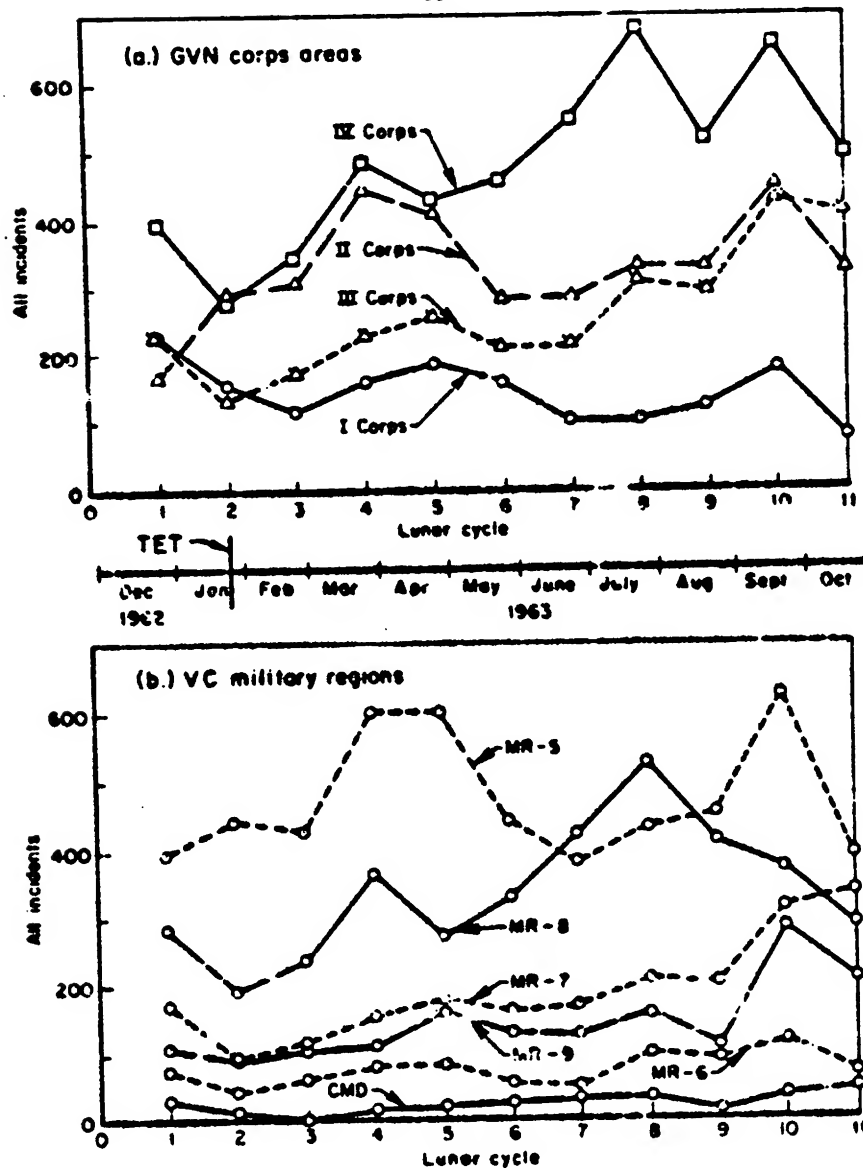


Fig 5--Incidents versus time (MACV reports)

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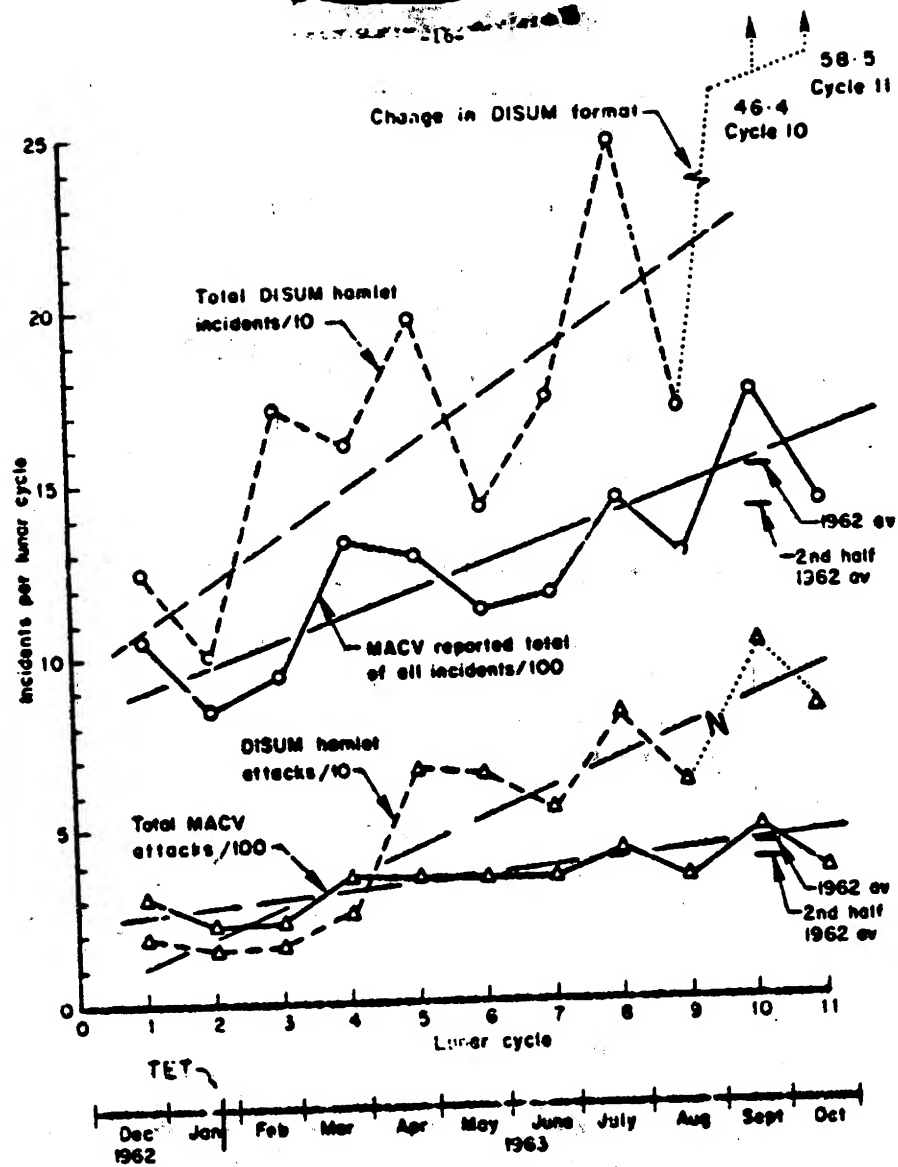


Fig.6 — Trends in South Vietnam incidents, attacks and totals

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DISUMs; previously roughly 30 per cent of all incidents and 43 per cent of the hamlet incidents were reported. Figure 7 shows trends for terror and propaganda for all of South Vietnam.

Figure 8a, based on all MACV-reported incidents against all types of targets, indicates the fractional distribution of the various incident types. Figure 8b shows the changes for the DISUM hamlet incident categories.

Table 1 shows the changes with time of the hamlet incident types, geographical locations, and casualties.

Table 2 compares the DISUM-reported hamlet incidents with the number of hamlet incidents reported in the MACAM-SH monthly PROVHAB status reports. The comparison is not exact because the various Corps reports sometimes covered slightly different periods of time.

Next follow an examination of the progress of the Vietnamese National SHP as measured by the reported percentage of the population in strategic hamlets and a cursory, crude evaluation of the effectiveness of the SHP.

POTENTIAL INDICATORS FOR EVALUATING THE PROGRESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STRATEGIC HAMLET PROGRAM

In Table 1 (p. 20) and Figs. 6 and 7 (pp. 16 and 18), we can see a general increase with time of the terror incidents, attacks, and total incidents involving hamlets. Reasonable questions one could attempt to answer are (1) Is the hamlet program making progress in reducing the VC threat? and (2) What are appropriate indicators for ascertaining the success (or failure) of the program?

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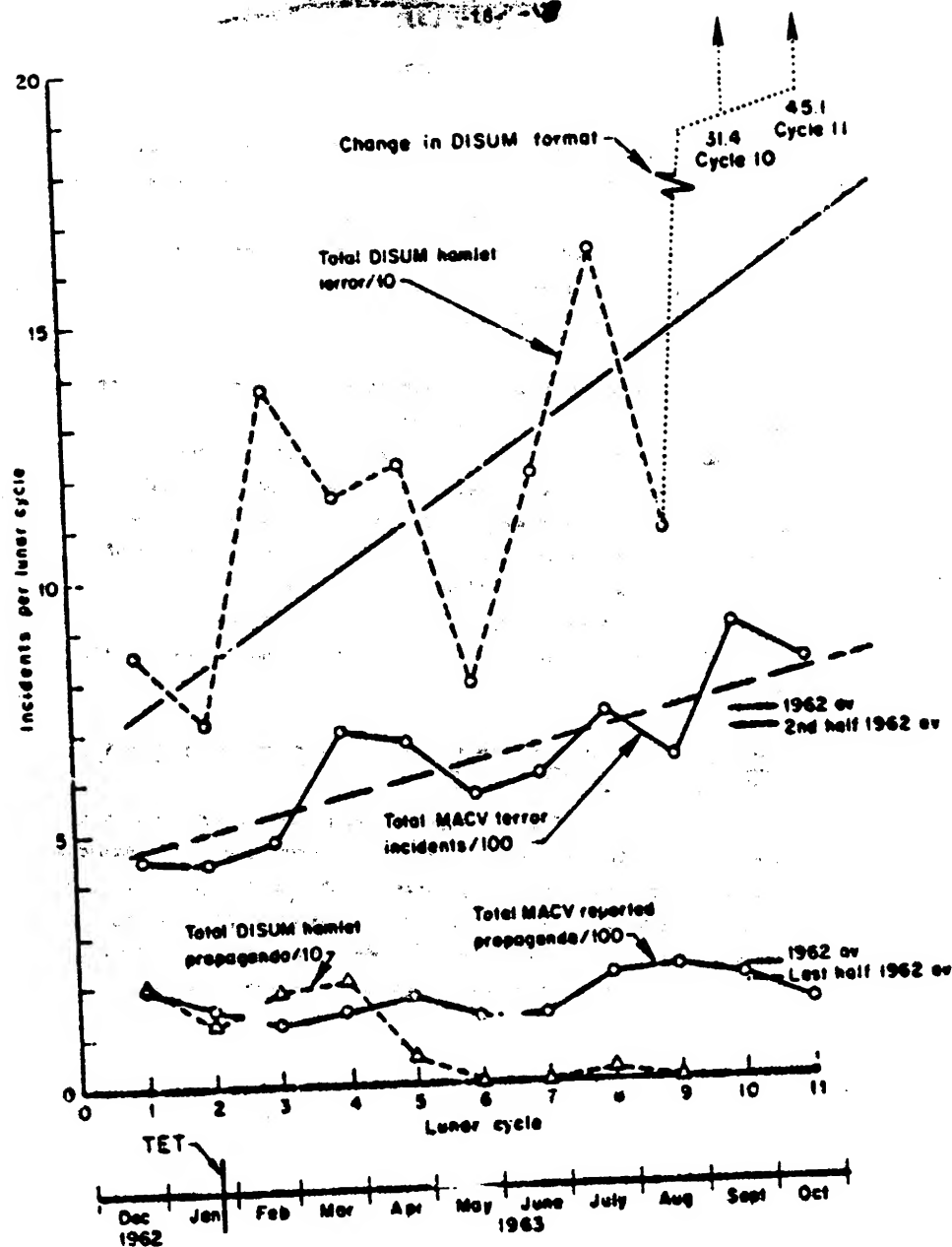


Fig. 7 — Trends in South Vietnam incidents, terror and propaganda

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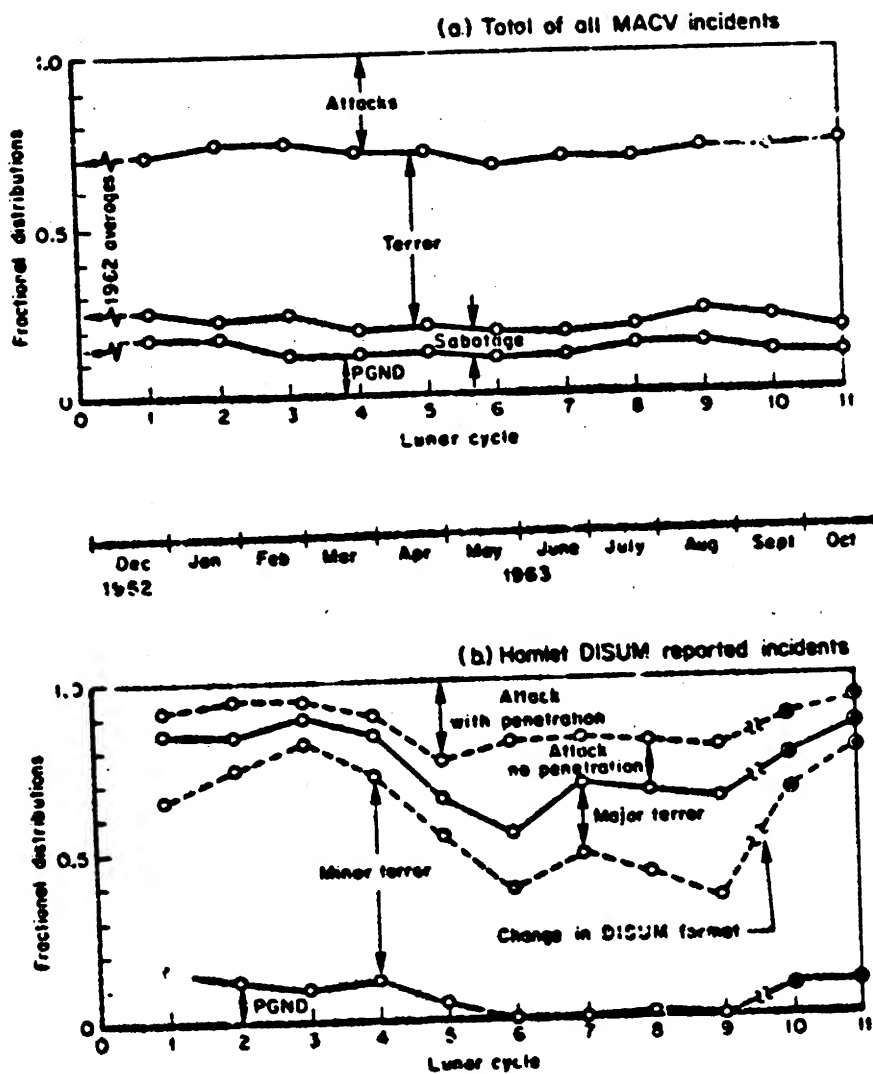


Fig. 8—Distribution among types of incidents over time, South Vietnam

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Recommendations include: a) rounded and hence do not always total 100 per cent.;

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Table 2
COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF DISUM-REPORTED HARLET INCIDENTS WITH THOSE IN PROVAB REPORTS

Corps	Incident Statistic	Lunar Cycle (Approximate)												Σ 5-5	
		5		6		7		8		9					
		Atk	Total	Atk	Total	Atk	Total	Atk	Total	Atk	Total	Atk	Total	Atk	Total
I	DISUM/PROVAB	6/16	22/31	5/13	12/23	4/12	16/23	2/9	15/20	15/14	27/35	34/64	95/132		
	Per Cent DISUM of PROVAB	50	71	38	52	33	70	22	90	107	77	53	72		
II	DISUM/PROVAB	12/51	49/138	9/67	27/223	7/14	29/89	5/29	33/58	4/18	33/103	37/179	171/651		
	Per Cent DISUM of PROVAB	24	35	13	12	50	33	17	34	22	32	21	26		
III	DISUM/PROVAB	3/38	34/72	13/22	26/42	11/13	31/42	16/37	43/136	15/32	44/137	64/142	178/429		
	Per Cent DISUM of PROVAB	24	46	59	62	85	74	43	32	47	32	45	41		
IV	DISUM/PROVAB	28/42	61/101	37/40	75/114	30/51	57/184	--	--	33/50	84/147	128/183	307/548 ^a		
	Per Cent DISUM of PROVAB	67	60	93	65	59	47	--	--	66	57	70	56		
All	DISUM/PROVAB	57/147	166/342	64/142	140/402	52/90	163/400	23/75	94/254 ^a	67/114	188/422	253/568	751/1760		
	Per Cent DISUM of PROVAB	32	49	45	35	58	51	31	37	59	45	46	43		

^aExcludes IV Corps for cycle 8, which was not reported.

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A possibly useful and readily available indicator (from the PROVHAB Status Reports) is the percentage of the rural populace reported to be in Strategic Hamlets. Other possibly useful indicators are the hamlet incidents per unit population and the fraction of the VC incidents that is directed against hamlets.

Figure 9 shows the variation of the per capita hamlet incidents per lunar cycle versus the percentage of populace in Strategic Hamlets. For the upper series, the major differentiation is by incident category; for the lower series, by VC military region. In every case the number of incidents and the population figures correspond to those of the particular VC military region. The main point from these graphs seems to be that terror incidents appear to be rising much more rapidly than attack incidents.

Figure 10 is a similar series of plots except that the ordinate is the percentage of the VC-initiated incident effort that has been directed against hamlets. Again, no substantive or significant trends are yet observable.

The fact that neither Fig. 9 nor 10 has shown anything significant is simply an indication either that the initial choice of indicators was poor or that we have not yet had sufficient time for significant values to develop for our indicators, or both. The percentage of population reported to be in Strategic Hamlets is seen to be a poor indicator of the degree of rural security, but better indicators, such as the reported percentages of planned hamlets with armed militia or of the

In order to include cycles 10 and 11 on a basis comparable to the other lunar cycles, correction factors were applied to these cycles. Since it is indicated that beginning on Sept. 17, 1963, all hamlet incidents are reported in the DISUMs (Ref. 2 gives 531 hamlet incidents for Sept. 14 to Oct. 9, 1963, while we count 404 incidents for Sept. 3 to Oct. 2), we have used a cycle 10 correction factor of $.43/.715 = .601$. The factor 0.43 is representative of an average fraction of hamlet incidents reported in the DISUMs prior to Sept. 17 (Table 2, p. 21) and $0.715 = (0.43 + 1.00)/2$, which implies that for cycle 10, 43 per cent of the hamlet incidents were reported during the first half of the cycle and 100 per cent thereafter. For cycle 11, the .43 factor was used.

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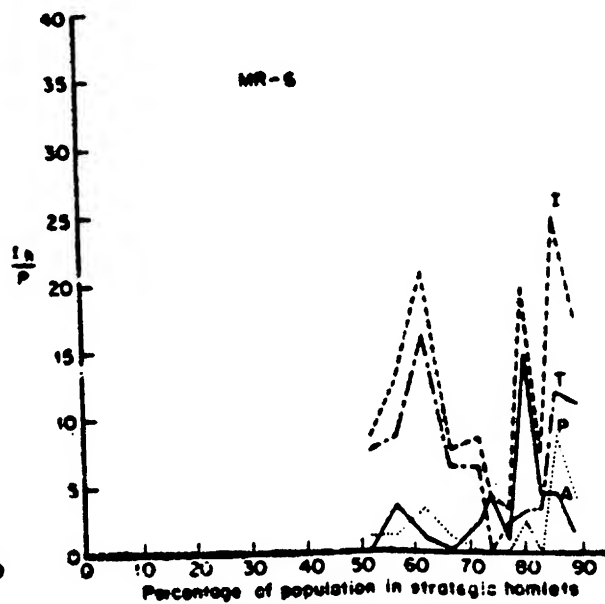
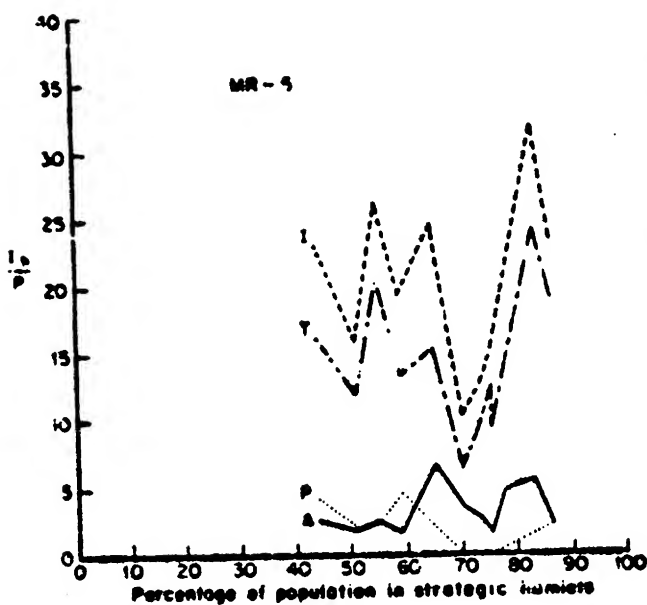
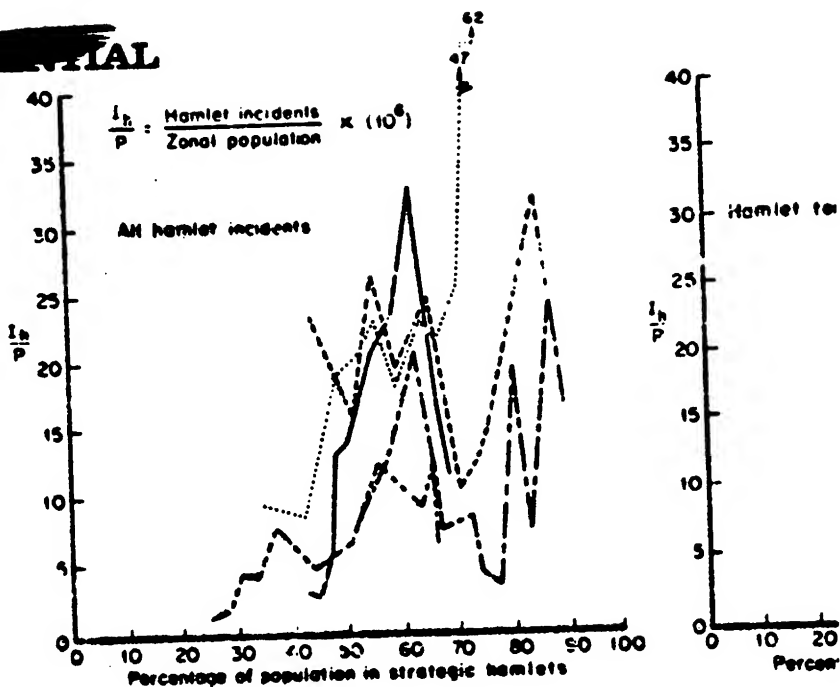


Fig. 9—Per capita

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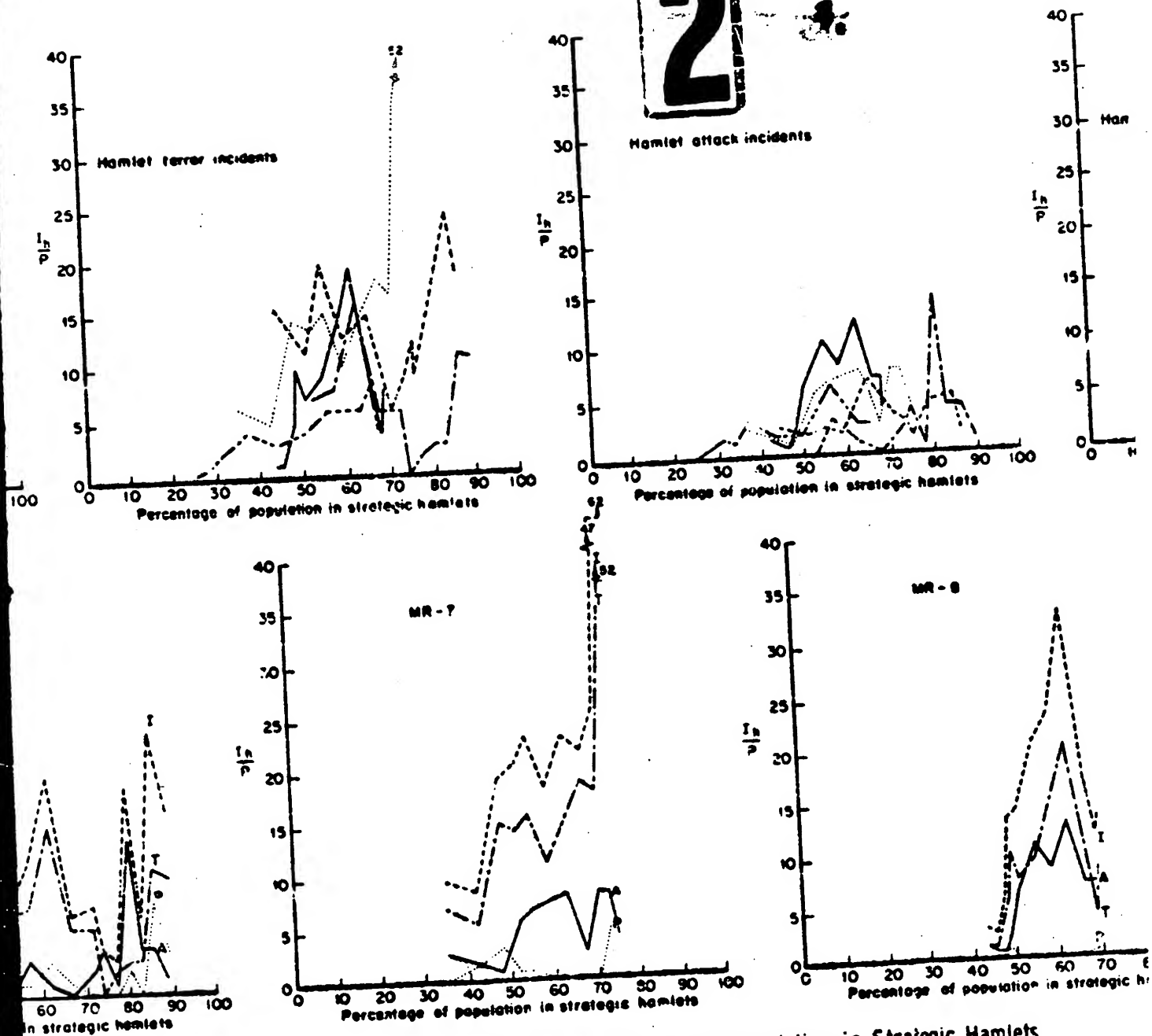
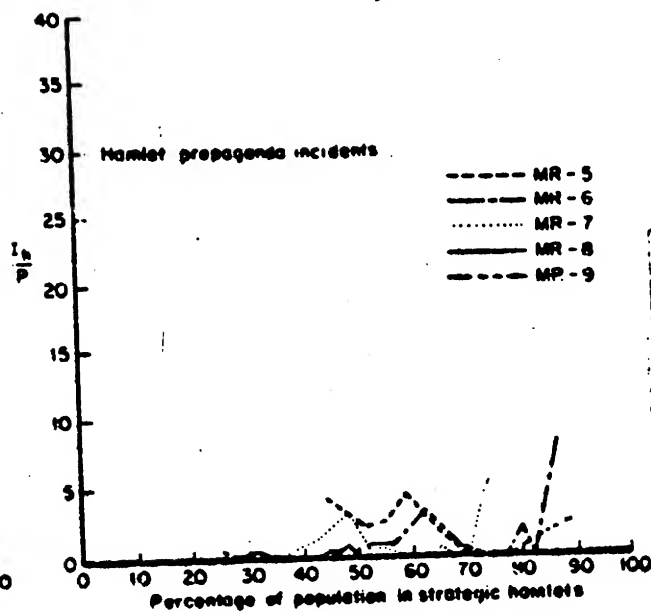
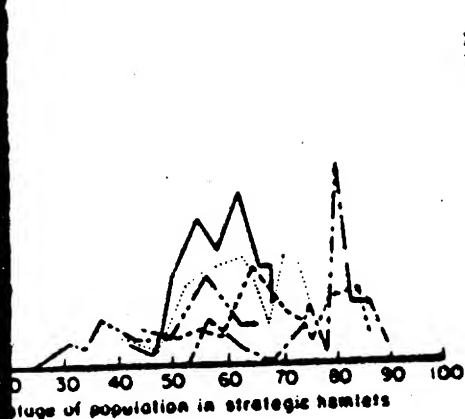
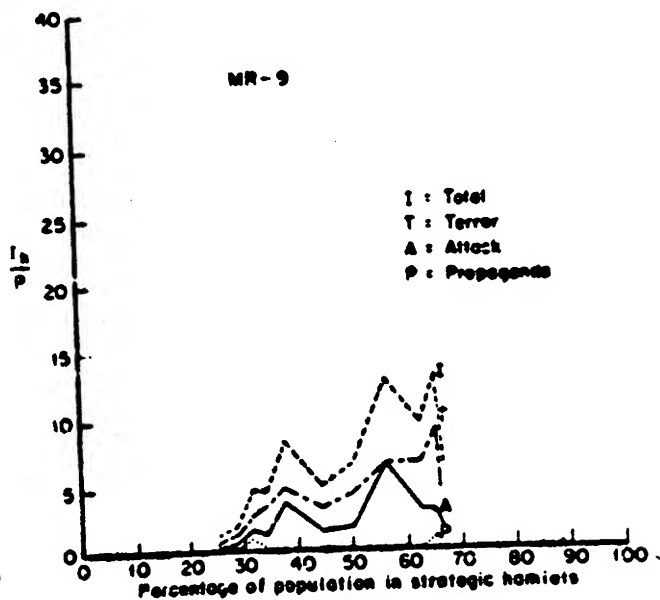
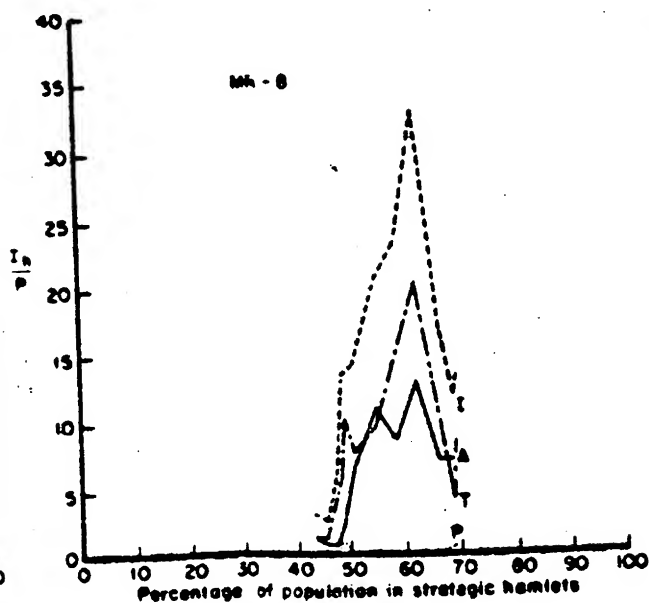


Fig. 9—Per capita DISUM hamlet incidents versus percentage of rural population in Strategic Hamlets

et attack incidents



3



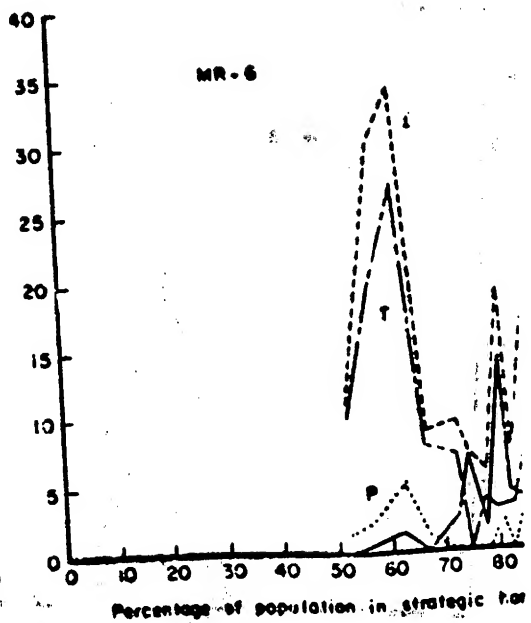
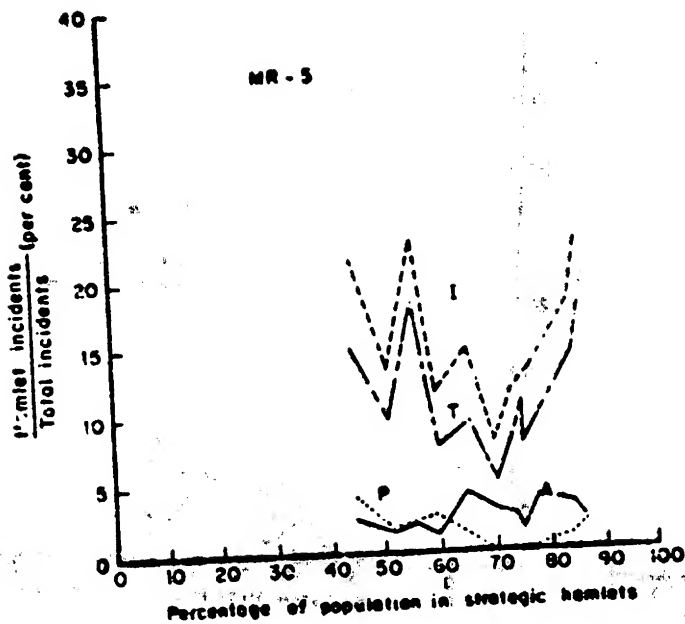
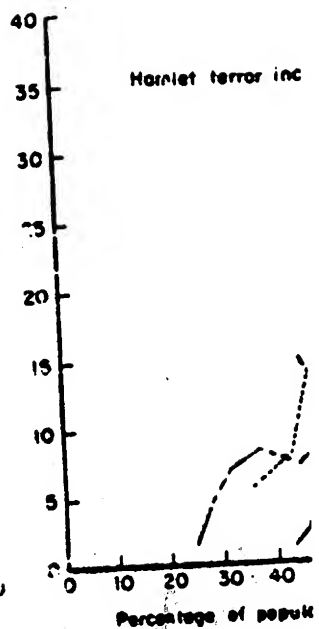
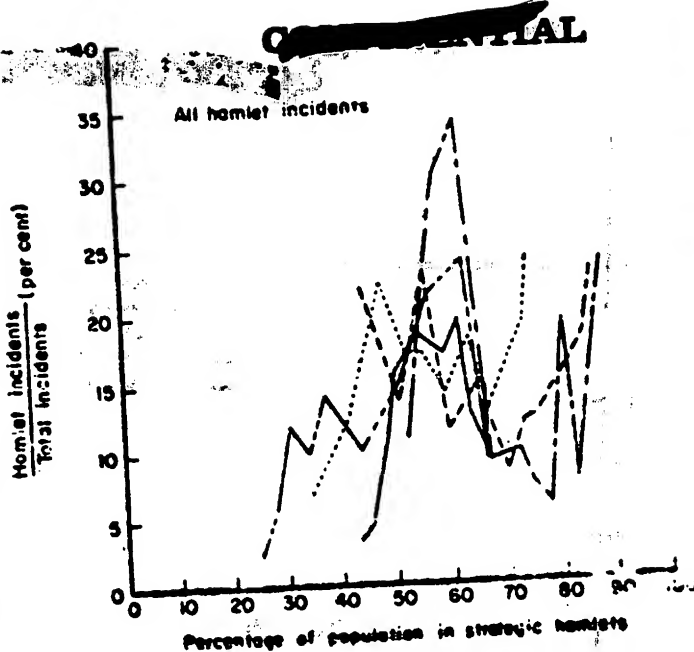
I : Total
T : Terror
A : Attack
P : Propaganda

ral population in Strategic Hamlets

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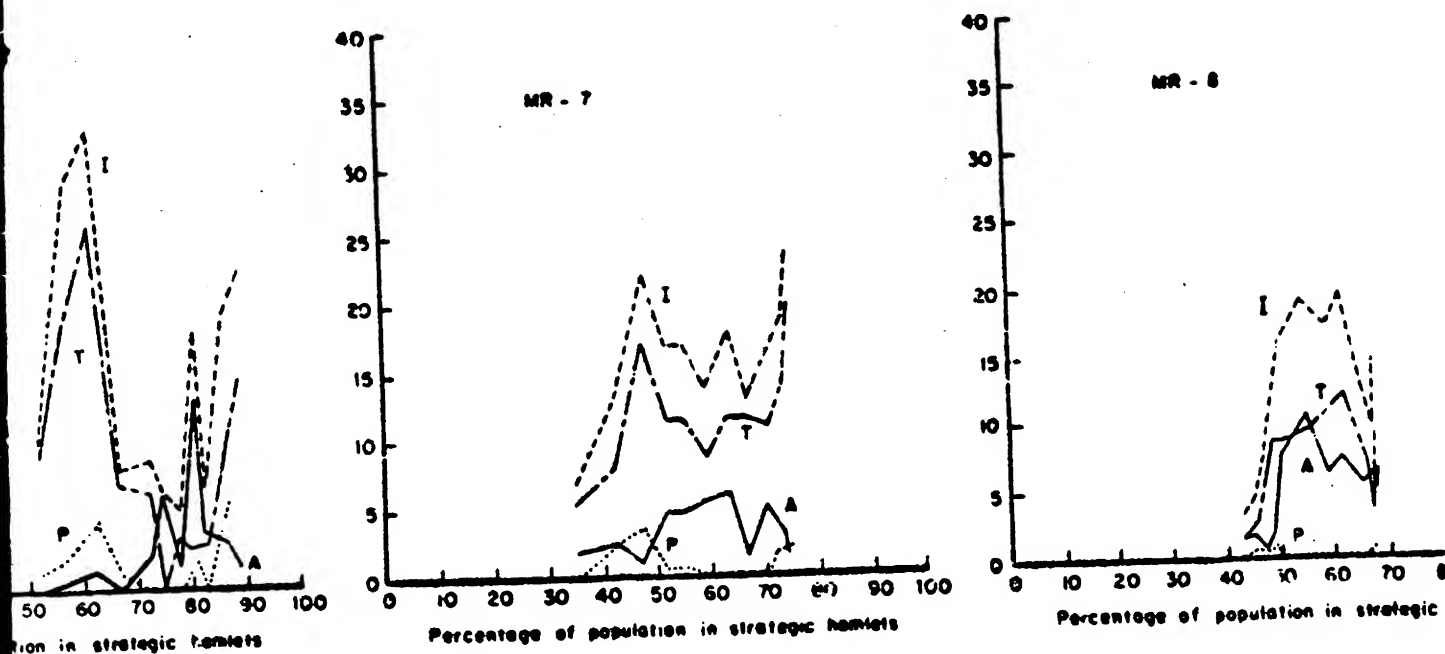
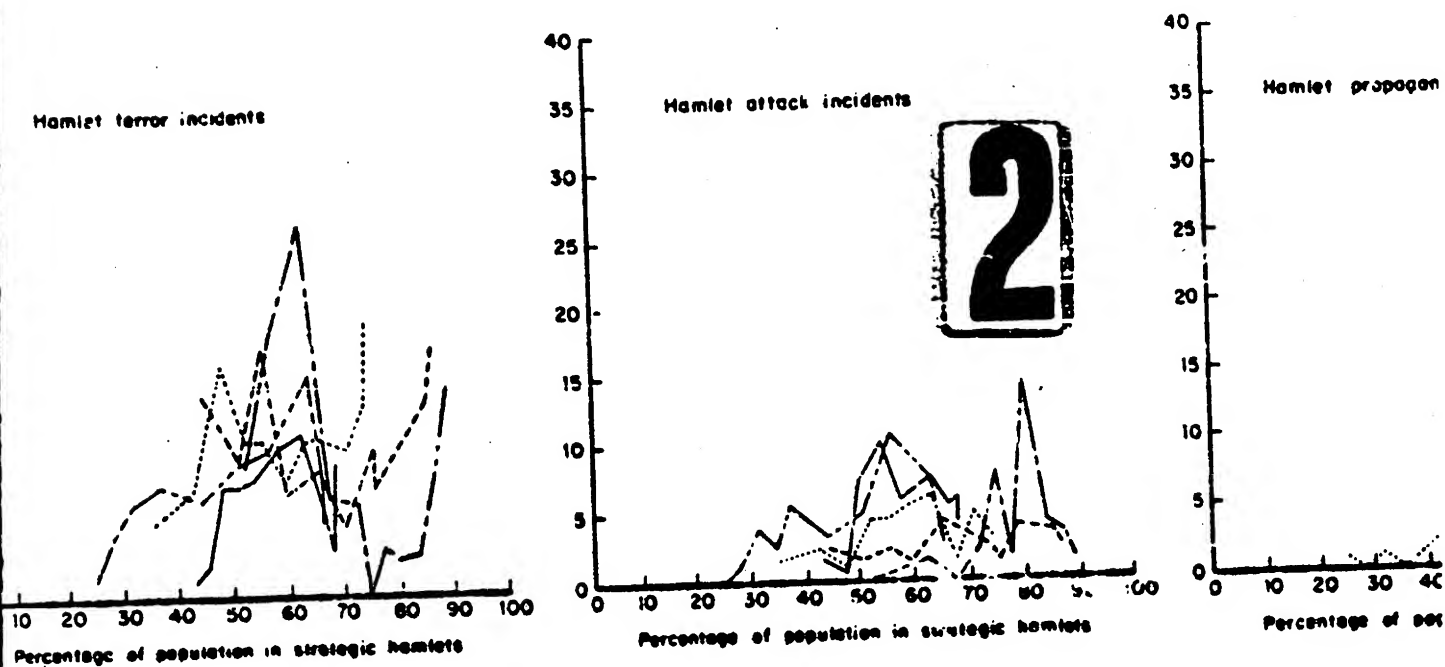
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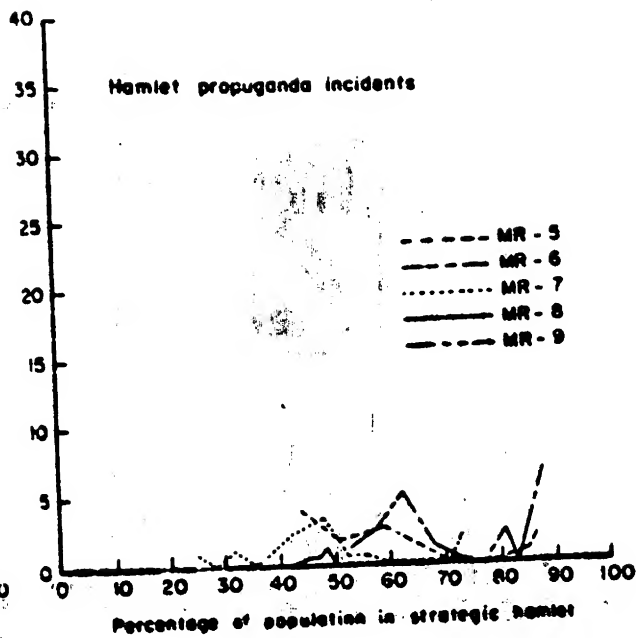


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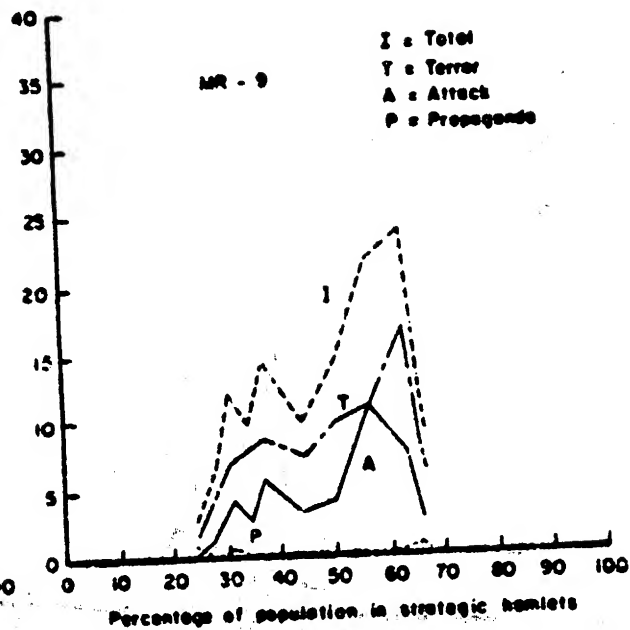
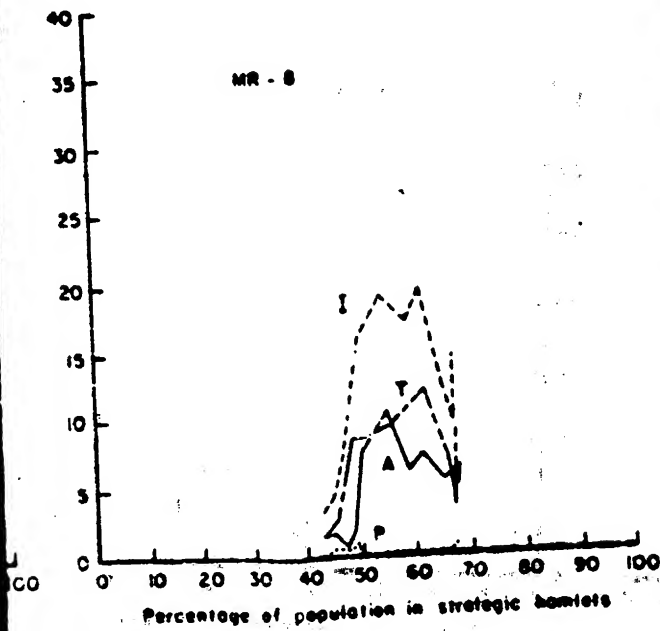
Fig. 10—Percentage



10—Percentage of DISUM hamlet incidents of total MACV incidents versus percentage of population in Strategic



3



Percentage of population in Strategic Hamlets

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planned militia that are armed, were not available for the complete time period covered by this study. A few of these other types of data are shown by way of illustration in Table 3:

Table 3

POTENTIAL INDICATORS
(in percentages)

Indicators	VC Military Region ^a					ALL SVN
	5	6	7	8	9	
(Rural Pop. in Sh.) ^b Rural Pop.	86	89	73	68	66	78
(Hamlet with Armed Militia) ^c (Planned Strategic Hamlets)	40	75	40	32	34	41
(Armed Hamlet Militia) ^d (Planned Armed Militia)	57	84	38	28	34	49

^aIndividual province variations are more extreme, e.g., corresponding figures for Quang Tri--100, 33, 15; Binh Long--75, 11, 18; Phu Bon--42, 3, 101.

^bAs of Oct. 29, 1963. (1)

^cAs of Sept. 30, 1963.

^dAs of Oct. 31, 1963. (1)

Except for MR 6, the percentages of armed hamlets and armed militia are roughly half the percentages of populace in the Strategic Hamlets. If earlier data can be obtained for the percentages of armed hamlets or armed militia, incident data of the type shown in Figs. 9 and 10 could be plotted with these variables as abscissas. However, here again the accuracy of the data is questionable. Just as the numbers of "true" Strategic Hamlets has been overstated (p. 2), the quoted figures for armed militia may be erroneous. For example, if the eventual effect of arming hamlet inhabitants is to reduce hamlet incidents, then the armed militia figures for MR 6 appear to be suspect (Table 3 and Figs. 9 and 10).

Although there appears to be at present no statistical evidence for the success (or failure) of the Strategic Hamlet Program, the recent compilation of such data as the number of hamlets having an armed militia could result in the determination of reliable indicators for the Strategic Hamlet Program.

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IV. SOME VIET CONG TACTICS IN HAMLET INCIDENTS

This Memorandum cannot provide a comprehensive discussion of VC tactics, but certain tactics (or preferences and constraints) can be delineated from the limited data available. These include the time of day, lunar date, and VC force sizes involved in the DISUM-reported incidents. Additional knowledge concerning the VC tactics could be determined by increased use of existing data sources. For example, one could analyze the effects of the security zone, the hamlet defense particulars, the government-initiated operations in the area of concern, etc.

For each incident category (Propaganda, Minor Terror, Major Terror, Attack--No Penetration, and Attack--With Penetration), as well as for kidnappings and for assassinations, the time of incident initiation, lunar day, and the relative degree of darkness were plotted. It should be noted, however, that while the incidents involving kidnapping and assassination are displayed separately, they are also included in the appropriate terror or attack categories.

Figure 11 shows the hours of incident initiation for 50 and 75 per cent of incidents during lunar cycles 1 through 8.*

Figure 12 shows the lunar day correlation for the incidents during lunar cycles 1 through 8.

Figure 13 shows the variations with darkness for the types of incidents for lunar cycles 1 through 9, using the approximations of the darkness conditions given on p. 9. Note that darkness exists during one-half of each day and that dark of both the sun and moon occurs during one-fourth of each lunar month.

Figure 1 shows the percentage distributions of VC force sizes for those cases where the force size was given or was estimated in

*Certain of these summary charts were prepared prior to our obtaining the hamlet incident data for later cycles. Since no significant shifting of tactics with lunar cycle was observable, inclusion of this later information should have only a minor effect.

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Initiation times of day which include 50 and 75% of hamlet incidents

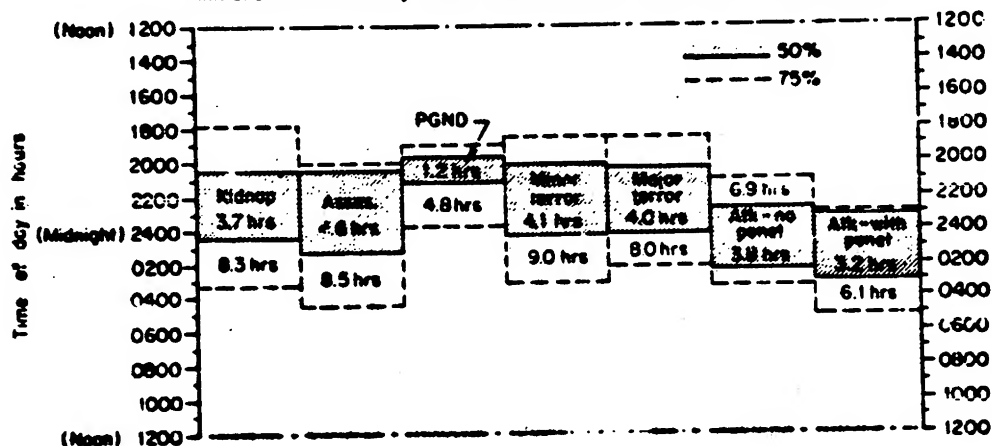


Fig. 11 -- Time of day correlation - cycles 1 through 8

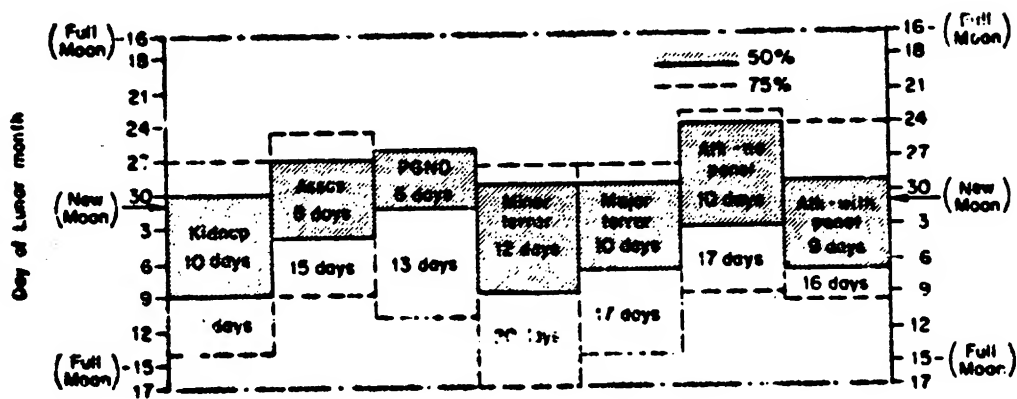
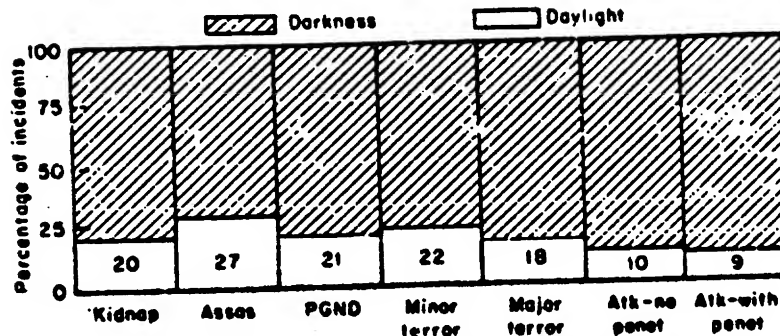


Fig. 12 -- Lunar day correlation - cycles 1 through 8

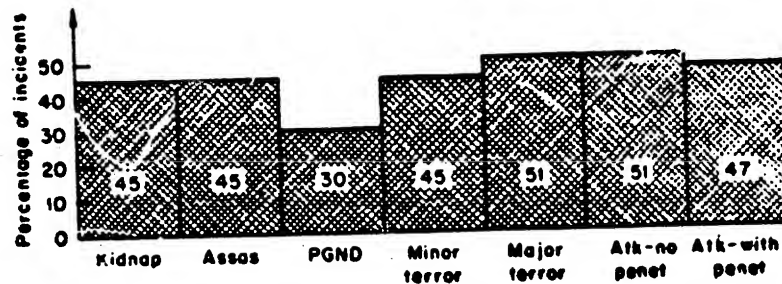
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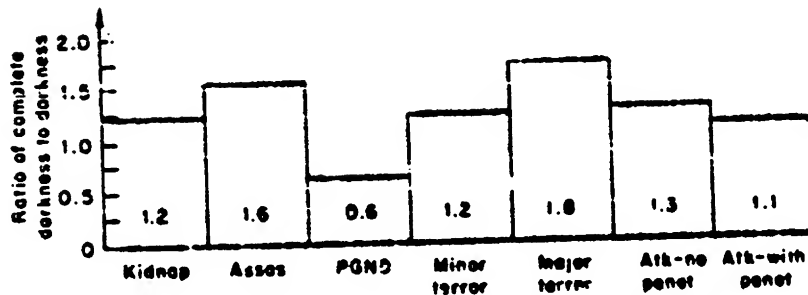
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(a) Light versus darkness comparison



(b) Incidents in dark of sun and moon (complete darkness)



(c) Ratio of $\frac{\text{Incidents in dark of sun and moon (complete darkness)}}{\text{Incidents in dark of sun alone (darkness)}}$

Fig.13—Light and darkness comparison for hamlet incidents, cycles 1 through 9

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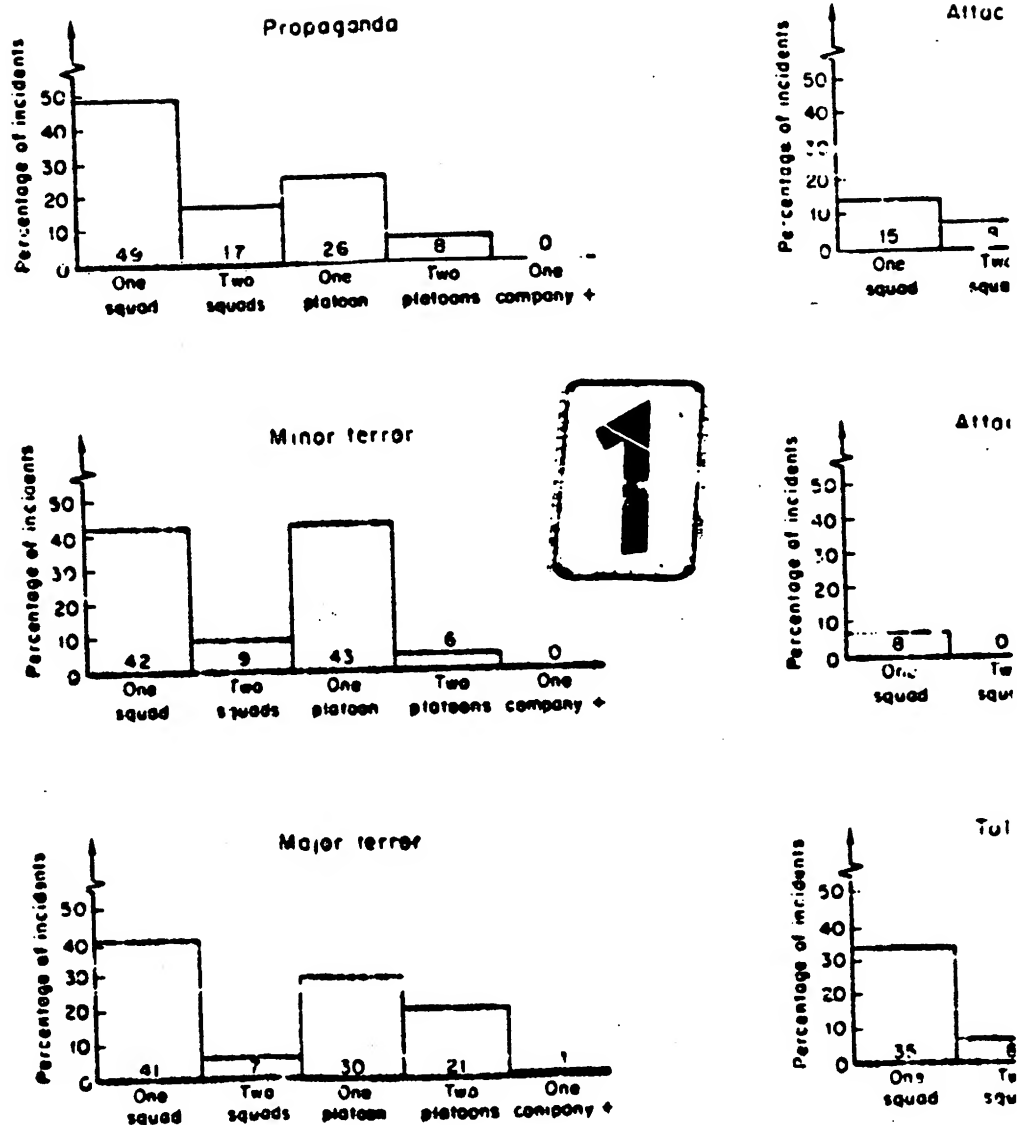
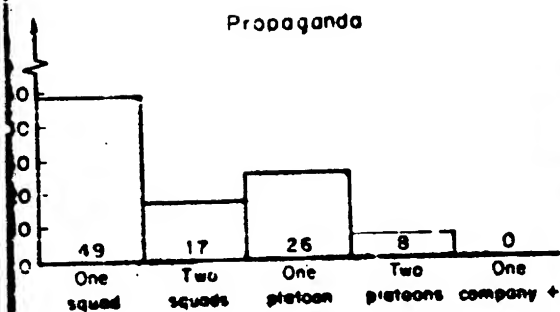


Fig. 14 — Distribution of known enemy force size against hamlets, 11

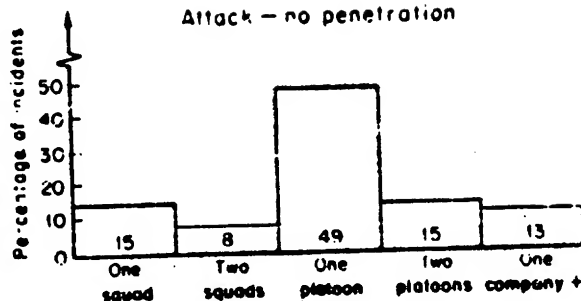
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Propaganda

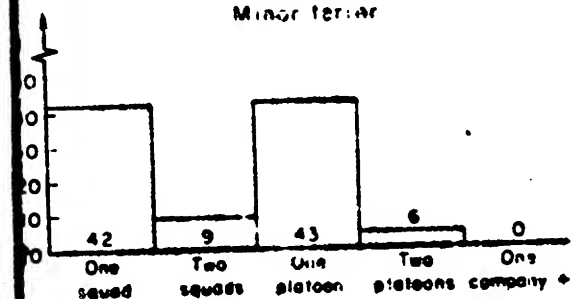


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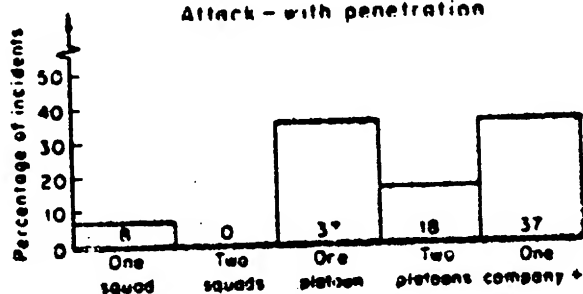
Attack - no penetration



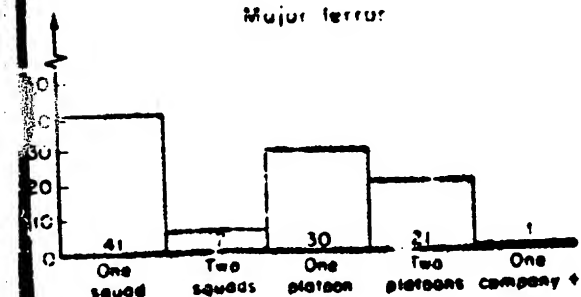
Minor terror



Attack - with penetration



Major terror



Total hamlet incidents

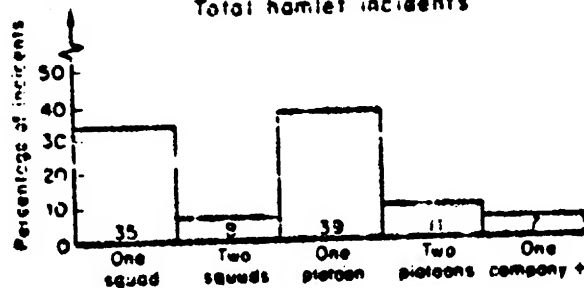


Fig. 14 - Distribution of known enemy force size against hamlets, lunar cycles 1 through 9

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the DISUMs for lunar cycles 1 through 9. The force size categories are defined as:

One Squad = 1 to 12 persons
 Two Squads = 13 to 30 persons
 One Platoon = 21 to 30 persons
 Two Platoons = 40 to 84 persons
 One Company = 85 to 164 persons

Summary data on hamlet incidents involving reinforcement are presented for the first 9 lunar cycles in Tables 4, 5, and 6. Unfortunately, the DISUMs do not contain such detailed information on the reinforcement of units defending hamlets. For example, the DISUMs do not indicate for how many hamlet incidents reinforcements were requested but not provided, the percentage of the known reinforcement incidents that had been requested and what their reaction time was, etc. However, some useful information can be developed from the available data, as Tables 4, 5, and 6 indicate.

Reinforcements of one type or another were provided for more than 8 per cent of all reported Viet Cong initiated incidents involving hamlets. Reinforcements involved ground forces of ARVN, the Civil Guard, Self Defense Corps, and Combat Youth, fixed artillery and mortar units, boats, aircraft flare drops, and air strikes.

Combinations of reinforcement, in only one case involving more than two types, were used in 25 of the 128 reinforcement incidents. The twelve air strikes were combined with flare drops in 7 incidents. (This leaves 5 air strikes with presumably no flare support. However, the hour and lunar day when these air strikes took place indicates that 2 were in moonlight, one near sunrise, and only one in the dark of the moon. Four of the five air strikes with flares took place in dark of both sun and moon.) Air and artillery were combined on three occasions.

The following frequencies of penetration (f_p) for attack cases taken from Table 6 are of interest:

No reinforcement	= 0.56
All cases involving reinforcement	= 0.47
Reinforcement not involving aircraft	= 0.55
Reinforcement involving aircraft	= 0.31
Air reinforcement alone	= 0.32
Artillery or mortar reinforcement alone	= 0.33
Ground reinforcement alone	= 0.57

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Table 4
HAMLET REINFORCEMENT

Lunar Cycle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total Hamlet Incidents Reported									
Propaganda	20	12	18	20	8	0	0	2	0
Minor Terror	62	61	125	95	99	55	86	105	61
Major Terror	23	10	12	20	23	23	34	59	47
Attack--No Penetration	8	10	9	9	21	38	25	3	27
Attack & Penetration	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>32</u>
Total (per lunar cycle)	121	99	172	160	197	143	144	166	170
Cases in Which Reinforcements Were Reported									
Propaganda	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minor Terror	2	6	7	4	2	0	1	6	4
Major Terror	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	4	0
Attack--No Penetration	2	4	3	3	6	3	6	9	11
Attack & Penetration	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>
Total (per lunar cycle)	6	12	15	14	17	4	10	30	20
Ground Force Reinforcement Cases									
Propaganda	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minor Terror	2	5	5	4	2	0	0	5	4
Major Terror	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	0
Attack--No Penetration	0	1	2	2	4	0	1	3	2
Attack & Penetration	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
Total (per lunar cycle)	4	8	11	11	11	1	2	17	9
Ground Force Reinforcement Ambushes or Mine Detonations									
Propaganda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minor Terror	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Major Terror	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Attack--No Penetration	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Attack & Penetration	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total (per lunar cycle)	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	2

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Table 5
TYPES OF HAMLET REINFORCEMENT
(9 lunar cycles)

Incident Type	Total Hamlet Incid.	Reinforcement Types ^a				Reinforcement Combinations											
		Grd Force	Arty	Mort	Flare	Alf	Stik	Bont	Arty	Mort	GF	GF	GF	GF	GF	GF	GF
Propaganda	80	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minor Terror	749	27	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Major Terror	251	6	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attack--No Pen.	182	15	17	0	10	10	1	1	1	0	3	2	6	1	1	0	1
Attack--Pen.	225	22	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Total	1487	74	31	4	12	12	4	4	5	2	4	4	7	1	1	1	1

Incident Type	Ground Force Reinforcement Types					C.F. Reinforcements							VC Delay of Reinforcements		VC Mine Detonated	
	ARVN	CG	SD	CY	UMK	Combinations					CG	CG	SD	CY		By Ambush
						ARVN	SIC	CG	CG	SD						
Propaganda	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minor Terror	1	6	12	3	3	0	0	4	2	2	0	4	2	0	0	1
Major Terror	1	-	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	3	1
Attack--No Pen.	3	6	3	0	4	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
Attack--Pen.	10	2	6	1	6	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	9	9	5
Total	15	23	30	4	15	2	2	6	6	6	2	6	6	9	9	5

^aHamlet incidents involving combinations of reinforcements are counted in both categories. The total "Reinforcement Types" minus the total of "Reinforcement Combinations" gives the total number of hamlet incidents using reinforcements. The total "Ground Force Reinforcement Types" minus the total "Ground Force Reinforcement Combinations" gives the total number of hamlet reinforcements involving ground forces.

Table 6
REINFORCEMENT AND PENETRATION COMPARISONS FOR HANLET ATTACKS

	Penet.	No Penet.
Reinf.	41 (46.6)	47
No Reinf.	104	13
	225	182

$$(f_p)_{\text{reinf}} = 0.466$$

$$(f_p)_{\text{no reinf}} = 0.577$$

$$\text{Sign. level}^c = 0.065, (\text{Chi})^2 = 3.40$$

	Penet.	No Penet.
Air, Arty, or Mortar Involved	17 (24.7)	36
Other Reinf.	24	11
	41	47

$$(f_p)_{\text{air, arty, or mortar involved}} = 0.321$$

$$(f_p)_{\text{other reinf}} = 0.586$$

$$\text{Sign. level} < 0.001, (\text{Chi})^2 = 11.27$$

	Penet.	No Penet.
Air Reinf. Involved	10 (11.9)	22
Other Reinf.	31	25
	41	47

$$(f_p)_{\text{air reinf involved}} = 0.312$$

$$(f_p)_{\text{other reinf}} = 0.554$$

$$\text{Sign. level} = 0.029, (\text{Chi})^2 = 4.74$$

	Penet.	No Penet.
Air Reinf Only	7 (7.16)	15
Arty, Mortar Reinf. Only	7	14
	14	29

$$(f_p)_{\text{air reinf only}} = 0.318$$

$$(f_p)_{\text{arty, mortar only}} = 0.333$$

$$\text{Sign. level} = 0.92, (\text{Chi})^2 = 0.316$$

	Penet.	No Penet.
Air Reinf. Only	7 (11.2)	15
Grd Reinf. Only	18	9
	25	24

$$(f_p)_{\text{air reinf only}} = 0.316$$

$$(f_p)_{\text{grd reinf only}} = 0.667$$

$$\text{Sign. level} = 0.016, (\text{Chi})^2 = 5.70$$

	Penet.	No Penet.
Arty, Mortar Only	7 (10.9)	14
Grd Reinf. Only	18	9
	25	23

$$(f_p)_{\text{arty, mortar only}} = 0.333$$

$$(f_p)_{\text{ground reinf only}} = 0.667$$

$$\text{Sign. level} = 0.024, (\text{Chi})^2 = 5.17$$

Figures in parentheses are expected values for a binomially distributed population, with no correlation between reinforcement and penetration, and f_p estimated from the total population (e.g., reinforcement plus no reinforcement).
Fractional frequency of penetration.

Significance level is used in conventional sense; the probability of obtaining the given results when the data are considered a random sample from a binomially distributed population (see Ref. 11, pp. 8-11).

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It is important to note that the frequency of penetration may differ considerably from the probability of penetration; significant differences may exist in the hamlet defense characteristics as a function of the types of reinforcement that occurred. For reinforcement cases not involving air reinforcement, f_p is reduced less than 5 per cent from the non-reinforced cases. However, the reduction when air, artillery, or mortar reinforcement is involved is roughly 40 per cent.

The hour and the lunar day of the reinforced hamlet incidents are shown in Fig. 15. No particular pattern is evident for these cases; the distribution of the reinforcement incidents is approximately the same as that of all hamlet incidents.

Surface reinforcements were often delayed by Viet Cong ambush and land mines. Of the 70 surface cases, 74 by ground forces and 4 by boat, 9 were ambushed and 5 detonated VC mines (only 1 of the 4 boat reinforcements was delayed by a mine). Thus 18 per cent of all surface reinforcement cases were delayed. All but two of the delays involved reinforcements for Viet Cong attacks against hamlets. Hamlets experiencing attacks therefore had 28 per cent of their reinforcements delayed; attacks with no penetration--25 per cent, and attacks with penetration--30 per cent. Presumably, many ambushes were set that were not effected since reinforcements did not occur.

The average number of casualties, both friendly and enemy, per reinforced hamlet incident is higher than the average per non-reinforced incident, but the friendly/enemy kill ratio changes in favor of friendly. The averages (KIA/WIA/MIA) per DISM hamlet incident are:

	<u>Friendly</u>	<u>Enemy</u>
Non-reinforced Incident	.32/.79/.36	.23/.12/.02
Reinforced Incident	1.60/2.63/1.02	2.91/.65/0

The average casualty data per reinforced incident should be qualified by noting the distribution of casualties among the incidents. No casualties were experienced on either side in 22 of the 128 reinforcement cases, the Viet Cong experienced no casualties in 65 other incidents, and GVN forces in 14 others.

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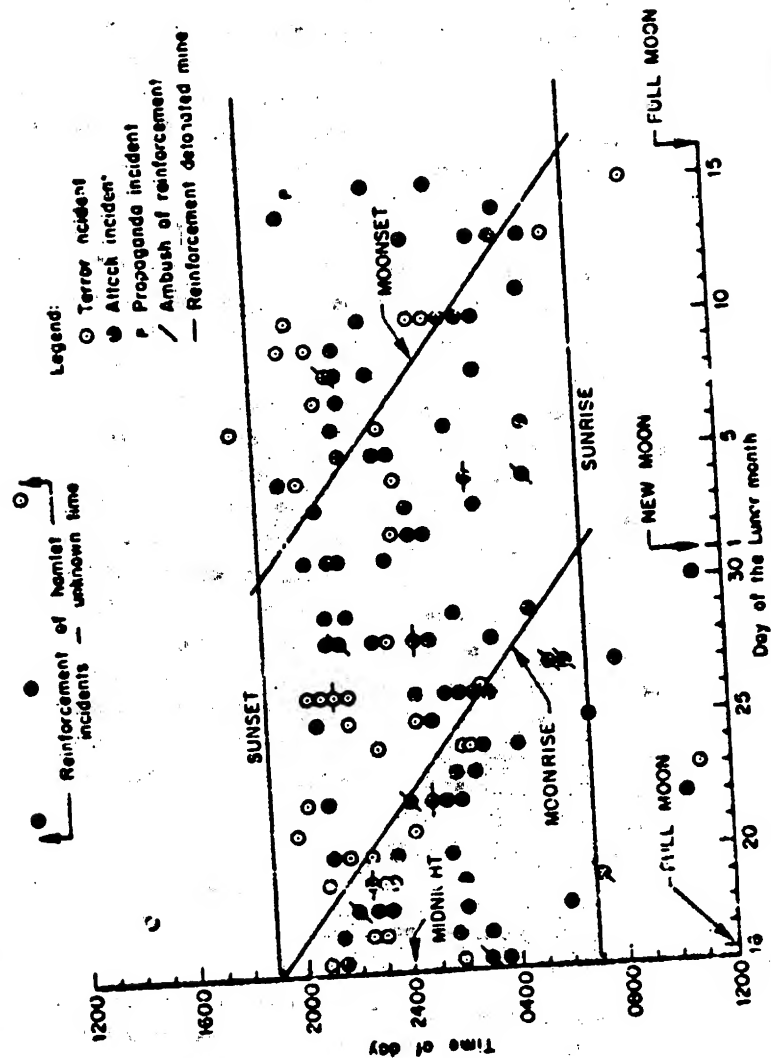


Fig. 15 — Distribution of reinforced hamlet incidents with darkness
(Lunar cycles 1-9)

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V. MANPOWER ALLOCATION VERSUS THREAT

Manpower requirements for defense of the Strategic Hamlets against VC attacks, superimposed on everyday labor requirements of the hamlets, emphasize the need for efficient use of defense manpower. Even the limited data available should be used toward this end. Figure 16 shows the distribution, with hour of attack initiation and lunar day, for all of the 324 "known-time" attacks during lunar cycles 1 through 8. Figures 17a and 17b show the frequency distributions for days and hours.

Although Fig. 17a shows a general threefold increase in attack frequency for the first half of the lunar cycle (line A-C), the last half of the cycle shows essentially no correlation. However, the small number of data bits (~10 per day) makes this plot of somewhat dubious significance. However, Fig. 17b shows a marked correlation with hour of the day. Many of the hamlet attacks are conducted by VC irregulars (auxiliaries) who must work during the day, can assemble only after dark, and must return to their homes prior to daylight. The straight lines AB and DE (frequency 0.25) are fair approximations for the daylight hours and the lines BC-CD (through frequency 3.25 at 0100 hr) for the darkness hours.

Figures 17a and 17b can be used to allocate defense manpower more efficiently. To meet the increasing expectancy of attack during the first half of the lunar cycle, the on-duty hamlet defense force could be increased during the hours of darkness, compensating by reducing the number on duty during daylight hours and during the portion of the lunar cycle in which the attack expectancy is lower. There should also be an augmentation to meet the large increase in attack expectancy during particular hours of darkness, as indicated on Fig. 17b. The maximum augmentation should be based on the fact that the expectancy of attack at 0100 hours is roughly 13 times that of daylight hours. Figure 18, showing attacks against all types of targets for Jan. 1 through July 1, 1963, is included for comparison.

The need for continuous data analysis of this nature is quite obvious, since the VC are likely to change their tactics in response to those of the hamlet defenders.

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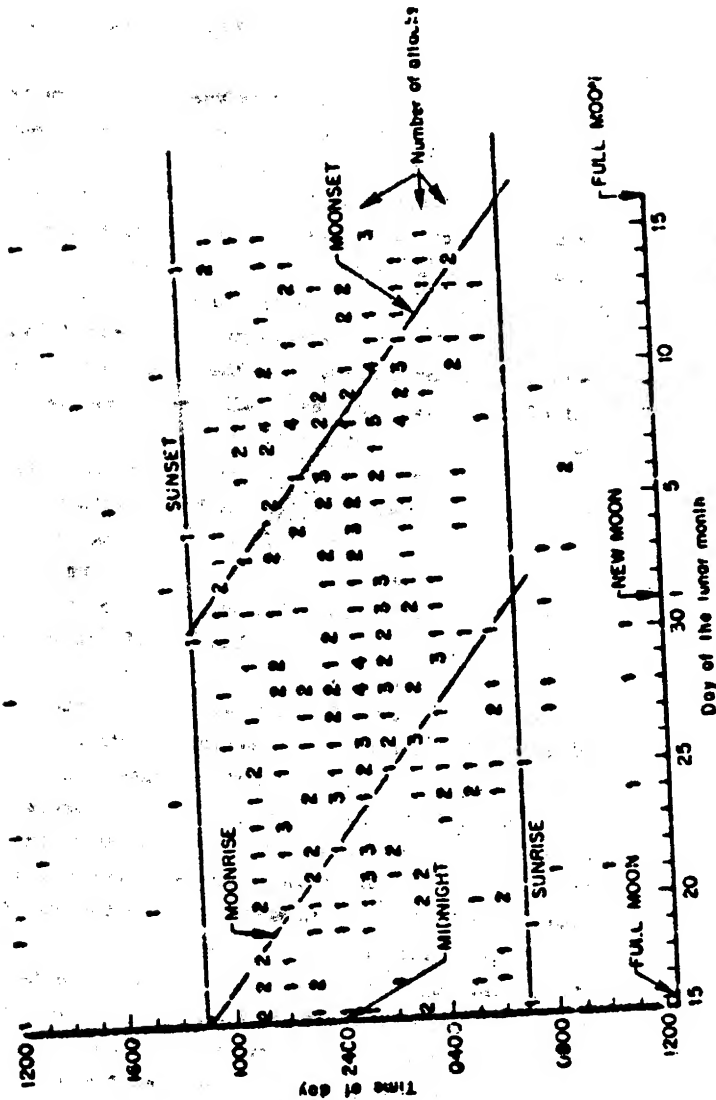
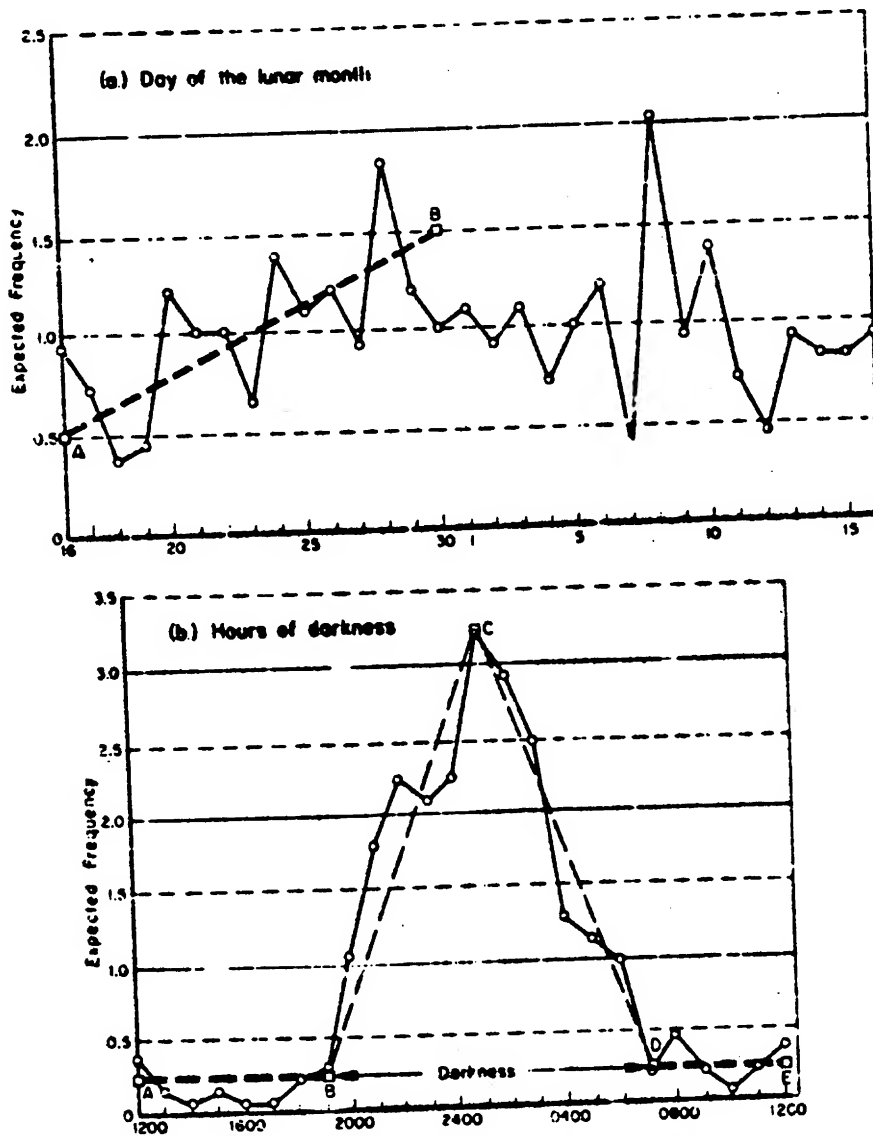


Fig. 16—DISUM hamlet attack incident frequency over time



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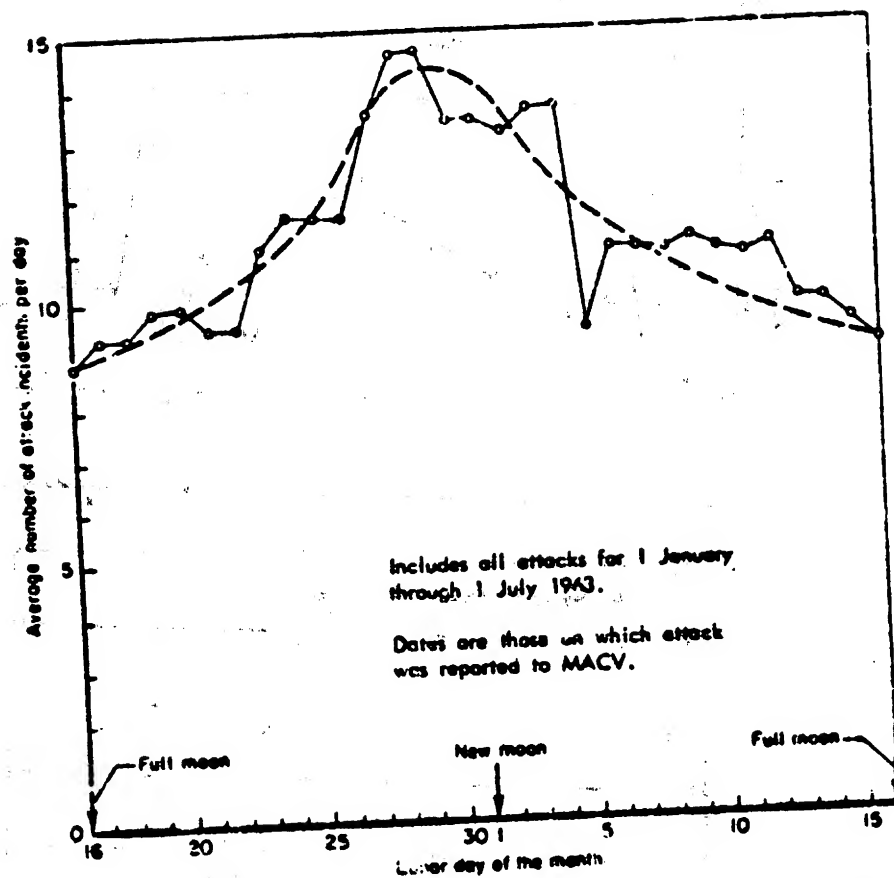


Fig. 15—Average attack frequency versus lunar day of the month (all types of targets)

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VI. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Lack of accurate and detailed information concerning hamlet incidents seriously limited both the detail and the scope of this study. However, it does provide a partial documentation of the Vietnamese National Strategic Hamlet Program and the Viet Cong reaction to it and suggests indicators for evaluating the SHP's effectiveness. On the other hand, unless better data are collected, collated, and subjected to detailed analysis, our understanding of the SHP, as well as the entire counterinsurgency effort, will continue to be seriously limited.

All types of hamlet incidents initiated by the VC show a marked correlation with time of day and phase of moon. More than 80 per cent of all incidents were initiated at night and 46 per cent in the dark of both sun and moon. In other words, one-third more incidents took place during dark of the moon than in moonlight. Approximately half the incidents were generated within a 10-day period centered roughly around the new moon. Examining the correlation with hours of the day or night, one finds that the mean times of initiation for half the propaganda incidents is 2030 hours, terror incidents 2230 hours, and attack incidents 0100 hours. This type of information could be useful in more efficient use of the limited manpower available for guard and other defensive duties in the Strategic Hamlets.

The analysis also demonstrates the relationship between VC force size and type of incident. As might be expected, the size of the force increases with the severity of the incident. For all hamlet incidents more than one-third involved one VC squad, another third involved one platoon. Among propaganda incidents, one-half were by one squad or less. On the other hand, more than one-third of the attacks that penetrated hamlets involved one platoon; more than another one-third involved company size VC forces. Correlation of this type of information with the available information concerning the security zone involved and the reinforcement capability could contribute to both hamlet defense and reinforcement. Reinforcement took place in fewer than 10 per cent of the incidents. However,

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among attacks on hamlets, it occurred 26 per cent of the time when the attack failed to penetrate and 16 per cent of the time with VC penetrations. Obviously an improved ratio of reinforcement would contribute to the SHP's effectiveness and to the inhabitants' morale particularly since penetration occurred in slightly more than half of the attacks.

When the reinforcement involved aircraft, the frequency with which an attack penetrated the hamlet was reduced to roughly 45 per cent of the value for the non-reinforced cases and the reinforced cases not involving aircraft. Since aircraft were involved in only 25 per cent of the reinforcement cases for the time period covered by this study, an alternative deserving investigation is increased use of flare-carrying and strike aircraft alerted by a direct radio net that includes the TR-20 village radios. Artillery and mortar reinforcement were equally as effective as air reinforcement in reducing attack penetration.

The importance of the SHP to security in Vietnam, the U.S. stake in that country, and the likelihood of insurgencies elsewhere in Southeast Asia, in Latin America, and perhaps in other areas suggest that additional, more detailed studies of the Vietnam SHP be undertaken. Such studies should consider civil as well as military aspects, and should incorporate improved data gathering and processing methods. (12)

The rising rate of attacks against Strategic Hamlets is of concern to both the GVN and the United States. While the implementation could be maintained at a slow rate over the countryside in general, this implies that the attacks will continue for a long time--until rather large areas become secure by virtue of a relatively high density of viable, self-protected Strategic Hamlets and the releasing of conventional forces for the aggressive pursuit of the Viet Cong. However, this slow method of implementation means a heavy burden on the inhabitants. On the other hand, Operation Sunrise in Binh Duong province in May of 1968, a "clear-and-hold" operation in conjunction with initiation of the province SHP, showed that a leapfrog implementation is subject to heavy risks and can involve large losses and unforced withdrawals. A study that provided reliable indicators for the SHP implementation and for the VC reaction would improve substantially the means for determining a more nearly optimum rate of implementation.

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